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THE ART OF ACTING
and
PUBLIC READING

THE ART OF ACTING
AND
PUBLIC READING

DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION

By
ROLLO ANSON TALLCOTT
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To

My Mother

Harriet Isadore Tallcott

PREFACE

This book has been written in response to a demand for some text that will outline a course of instruction leading to professional work. It takes up the work of *Acting* and *Public Reading,* and presupposes thorough training on the part of the student in common reading and speech mechanics. It is for the advanced student in the normal school, the college, the professional school of oratory, or the private studio.

The purpose of the book is to set forth a comprehensive classification of the different ways of presenting various types of literature, taking into consideration the author's purpose and the class of audience to be entertained. It is my belief that such a classification can be made and that it may become a useful guide in maintaining a standard of consistency among readers, entertainers and actors so that there may be less harsh criticism which the average elocution teacher feels moved to make upon the propriety of this or that feature of an entertainment.

In taking up this classification, let me say that I do not hope to have it accepted as infallible or as the only classification possible, but I do hope that it will give the young platform artist a clearer conception of his field so that he will not encroach upon the actor's art in the name of public reading.

It is my purpose to show among other things that a study of the actor's art is fundamentally essential to

a complete understanding of the reader's art and that no public reader can be truly suggestive unless he has first been given the opportunity to express completely and conscientiously all action that he hopes ultimately to suggest.

One of my best friends in the profession maintains that *good taste* is the only standard we may safely follow in carrying out our individual styles of entertaining. This might be true were it not for the fact that there are many talented entertainers who lack natural discernment and good taste, and who believe that any method of presentation which brings a laugh or hearty applause is acceptable. It is for such that a standard classification is necessary. It may even prove helpful to those champions of good taste who differ with their fellow entertainers as to what is really good taste. While it is true that good taste might govern the majority, it is just as true that there are other determining factors which enter into the presentation of literature and make it more effective.

I am indebted to Miss Mae Belle Adams of Emerson College of Oratory and to Professor H. M. Tilroe and Mrs. Florence Butler of Syracuse University for my early instruction in fundamental principles of interpretation; to Professor Fredrick D. Losey of New York City, whose technical instruction and whose professional work in Shakespearian readings have always been a source of inspiration to me; to Professor I. L. Winter of Harvard University and to Professor Arthur E. Phillips of Chicago, whose training in voice culture and the principles of practical public speaking

has been invaluable; to Ernest Elton of New York and to Donald Robertson of Chicago, whose instruction in acting gave me the actor's point of view and first led me to see the true relationship that acting bears to public speaking and public reading, and perhaps most of all I am indebted to Professor S. H. Clark of Chicago University for many valuable suggestions relating to the classifications set forth in this book.

I also take occasion here to express my appreciation for the careful reviewing of my manuscript which Professor Ephraim Eisenberg of New York University has given.

R. A. T.

Butler University,
Indianapolis, Indiana.

INTRODUCTION

General Remarks.—All art is suggestive but some is more suggestive than others. There seems to be an assumption on the part of a few teachers of elocution that the more suggestive presentation is the more truly artistic. This is not true. Up to a certain point realism is as artistic as suggestion but in a different way. *Acting* is much more realistic than *Reading* but it is no less an art, for with all the attempts at realism, acting is still highly suggestive.

Any art seeks to bring out essentials and to omit all that is not essential. If it were possible to reproduce life on the stage *exactly,* it would not be art. A photograph untouched by the artist's hand is not art—it is science. It reproduces exactly non-essentials as well as essentials. A good painting of the same object *is* art for it reproduces only the essentials of color, form and perspective, and gives the *impression* of a real reproduction. A crayon drawing of the same object leaves out the realistic element of color and depends a little more upon the imagination of the beholder. A line drawing of the same object in pen and ink leaves out shading and depends still more upon suggestion. All these forms of art are suggestive but in different degrees and from different points of view. Similarly the actor may be compared to the painter, and the reader to the illustrator. As the painter with the use of color is the most realistic of artists, so the actor

with the use of make-up, costumes, scenery, furniture, etc., is the most realistic of his class of artists. As the illustrator eliminating color makes the carefully shaded crayon drawing, so the reader, without make-up, costume, properties, etc., in *personating* presents his characterization in literal action. As the illustrator in still more suggestive drawing eliminates further the element of shading and by mere pen and ink, broad line suggestion makes a cartoon, or exaggerated comedy sketch, so the reader in *impersonative reading* eliminates literal action and portrays his comedy or eccentric characters in voluntary vocal adaptation and facial characterization. As the illustrator in most highly suggestive form and perspective makes the pen and ink sketch for serious rather than comedy effect, so the reader in *pure reading* eliminates further vocal and facial characterization and becomes most highly suggestive in his portrayal of character moods, and in his presentation of description and narration.

Purpose.—The following chapters will give an exposition of the essential factors in the presentation of literature through *Acting, Personating, Impersonative Reading* and *Pure Reading;* it will classify the types of literature and the kinds of audiences best suited to various styles of presentation, and it will suggest methods of study.

These types of delivery will be taken up in the order of their progression from realistic presentation on the stage to the most highly suggestive presentation on the public platform.

Explanation of Diagrams.—In order that the

FIGURE A.

Comparing the Arts of the Actor and the Reader to Those of the Painter and the Illustrator

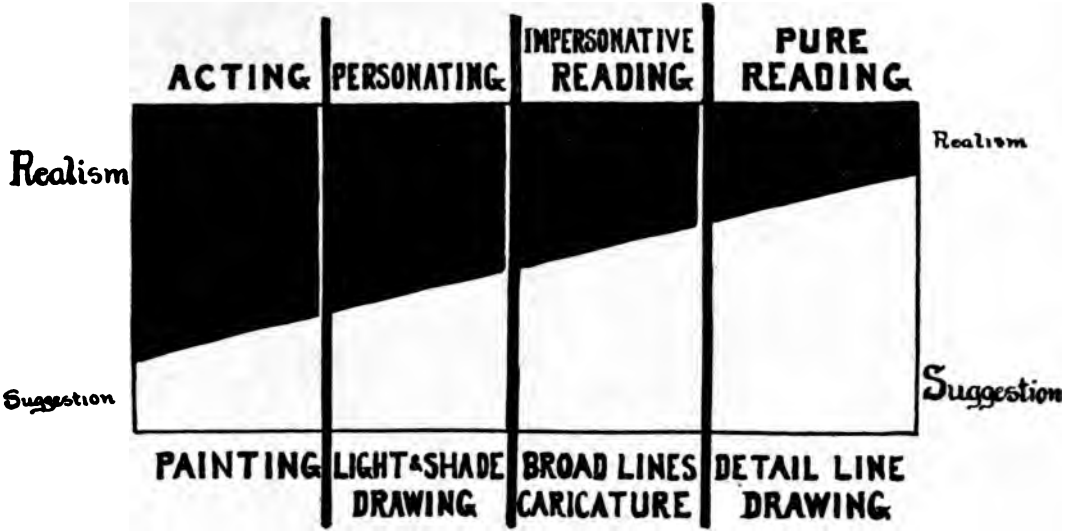
ARTIST	THE ACTOR alone on the stage		THE READER alone on the platform		
ART	ACTING with all stage accessories		PERSONATING without the aid of makeup, properties and stage accessories	IMPERSONATIVE READING	PURE READING
MATERIAL	THE PLAY	THE SOLILOQUY	THE PERSONATION	THE CHARACTER READING	THE INTERPRETIVE READING
TYPE OF COMPOSITION	Farce Farce-Comedy Comedy Comedy-Drama Drama Tragedy	Within a Play Complete in Itself	Soliloquy Monologue Eccentric Address	Character Soliloquy Character Monologue Character Narrative Character Play Character Series	Reading Soliloquy Reading Monologue Reading Play Descriptive Reading Narrative Reading Lyric Reading Declamation
KEYNOTE	SCENIC EFFECTS		LITERAL ACTION	ECCENTRIC COMEDY	MOOD MANIFESTATION
ARTIST	THE PAINTER		THE ILLUSTRATOR		
ART	PAINTING with the use of color		LIGHT & SHADE DRAWING without the use of color	BROAD LINES IN CARICATURE	DETAIL LINE DRAWING
PRODUCT	DETAILED ART	IMPRESSIONISTIC ART	CRAYON DRAWINGS	CARTOONS	PEN AND INK SKETCHES
KEYNOTE	COLOR		BLENDED SHADOWS	COMEDY	MOOD

relationship which the Actor and the Reader bear to each other and to their respective types of presentation may be clearly understood, it is compared by diagram to the relationship which the Painter and the Illustrator bear to each other and to their respective kinds of art.

(1.) Comparison in Diagram Figure A. It will be observed that a strong dividing line separates the art of the Actor from the art of the Reader, and that the same line extended down the page also separates the art of the Painter from the art of the Illustrator. This heavy line has a special significance in that it represents for the entertainer the point of departure from the use of properties and all stage accessories, while for the artist it represents the point of departure from the use of color.

The Actor is likened to the Painter in that each does his work as realistically as possible. The Actor with all stage accessories does his work through *acting* with action and characterization complete in every essential detail, first, in the play with fellow actors, and second, in the Soliloquy, a slightly less realistic and more imaginative selection in its purpose, alone on the stage. The Painter by the use of color does his work through *painting* with realistic representation of nature's colors, form and perspective first, in Detailed Art, and second, in Impressionistic Art, which is slightly less realistic and more imaginative in its purpose. In the actor's art the key-note is the primary necessity for scene, properties and stage effects, while the key-note for the painter's art is the necessity for color.

FIGURE B.

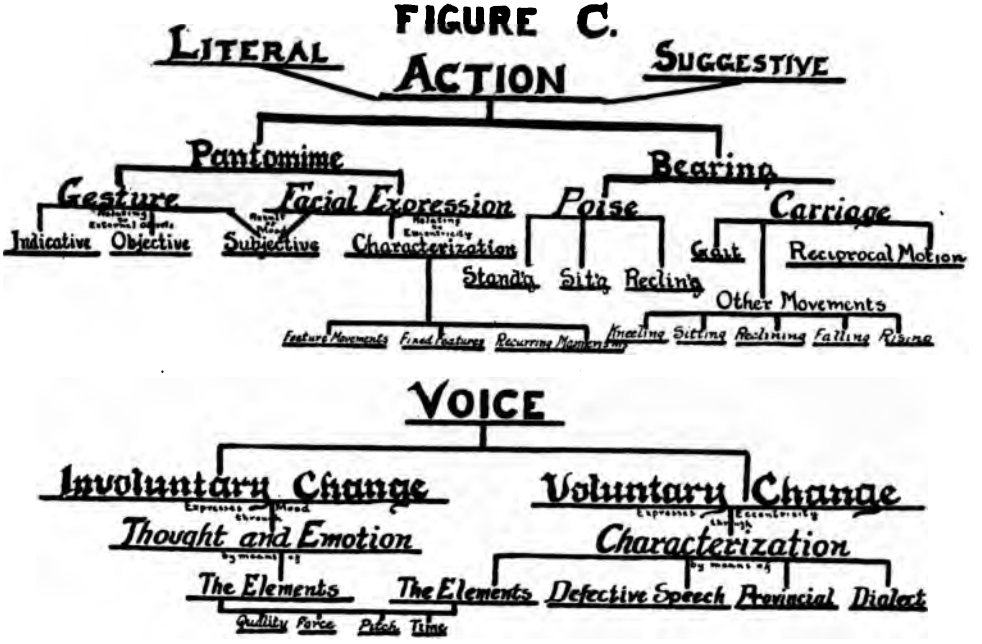


The shaded area represents the proportionate decrease of Realism with the increase of Suggestion as the student passes from Acting through Personating and Impersonative Reading to Pure Reading.

The diagram also illustrates the same proportionate decrease of Realism with the increase of Suggestion in passing from Painting to Detail Line Drawing.

Passing to the right of the dividing line in the diagram, the Reader, who always works alone, *without the aid of make-up, properties or stage accessories of any kind,* does his work in three ways, namely, through *personating,* through *impersonative reading* or through *pure reading,* while the Illustrator, *without the use of color,* does his work in three ways, namely, through *light and shade drawing,* through *broad lines in caricature* and through *detail line drawings.* The reader in personating recognizes the key-note, literal action, while the illustrator recognizes as his key-note in light and shade drawing, the necessity for perfectly blended high lights and shadows, perfect form and perfect perspective. For both the reader and the illustrator this is a step toward suggestion and a step away from realism and attention to detail. The reader in impersonative reading departs from literal action and retains only vocal and facial characterization in recognizing the key-note, comedy or eccentric characterization, while the illustrator in broad line, caricature drawing also recognizes eccentric characterization as his key-note and departs from perfectly blended light and shade, using only rough lines without much regard for perspective. The last step toward highly suggestive art and away from realism is pure reading for the reader and detail line drawing for the illustrator. Here the reader departs entirely from external characterization or eccentric comedy and depends solely upon the expression of mood which is recognized as the key-note and is expressed through involuntary vocal changes, suggestive action including

FIGURE C.


LITERAL
ACTION
SUGGESTIVE
Pantomime
Bearing
Gesture
Facial Expression
Poise
Carriage
Indicative
Objective
Subjective
Characterization
Standing
Sitting
Reclining
Gait
Reciprocal Motion
Other Movements
Feature Movements
Fixed Features
Recurring Mannerisms
Kneeling
Sitting
Reclining
Falling
Rising
VOICE
Involuntary Change
Voluntary Change
Thought and Emotion
Characterization
The Elements
The Elements
Defective Speech
Provincial
Dialect
Quality
Force
Pitch
Time

subjective gesture and facial expression. The illustrator recognizes mood as his key-note also and expresses it in perfect suggestion of perspective and form in line drawings of a serious rather than humorous nature.

(2.) Comparison in Diagram Figure B. In Figure B the shaded area represents the proportion of realistic presentation in the successive kinds of delivery, acting, personating, impersonative reading and pure reading as it decreases correspondingly with the increase of suggestiveness represented by the unshaded area. The same proportion exists in passing from painting to detailed line drawing.

(3.) Significance of Diagram Figure C. Figure C presents to the eye a means of visualizing the two classifications for Action and Voice. It is to be understood that the terms *Suggestive* and *Literal* apply to all action including the zonal classification.

CONTENTS

PART ONE

ACTING

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	GENERAL DISCUSSION	1
	Definition	1
	Relationship to Reading	3
	Limit of Discussion	6
	Types of Literature Suitable for Acting	7
II	THE PLAY	8
	Definition	8
	Kinds of Plays	8
	Limit of Discussion	11
	Technique of Presentation	12
	1. The Setting	12
	2. Kinds of Furniture	13
	3. Properties	14
	4. Grouping of Characters	15
	5. Mechanical Effects	15
	6. Lighting Effects	16
	7. Concerning Make-up and Costumes	20
III	THE PLAY (continued)	23
	Technique of Presentation (continued)	23
	8. General Stage Business	23
	9. Detailed Business	36
	10. Individual License in Business	39
	11. Silent Acting	39
	a. Unobtrusive Silent Acting	40
	b. Aggressive Silent Acting	41
	12. The Speaking of Lines	41
	13. Asides	45
	14. Soliloquies	47
	Literary Presentation of Plays	48

CONTENTS—*Continued*

CHAPTER		PAGE
IV	THE ONE CHARACTER PLAY, OR SOLILOQUY	50
	Definition	50
	Comparison of the Soliloquy and the Aside within the Play	51
	The Relative Importance of Scenery and Furniture	52
	Excerpts from Plays for the Platform	53
	Technique of Presentation	55
V	ILLUSTRATIVE MATTER	57
	From the Play Requiring Two or More Characters	57
	Illustration from the One Character Play	59
	Brief Summary	63
VI	REHEARSING BEGINNERS	65
	General Remarks	65
	Selecting the Cast	66
	Reading Rehearsal—General Business Given	68
	Act by Act Procedure	69
	Memorizing Lines and Cues	69
	Detailed Business	69
	Property Rehearsal	71
	Polish	73
	Dress Rehearsal with Effects	79
	Final Rehearsal	80
	A Final Word	81

PART TWO

READING

VII	GENERAL DISCUSSION	87
	Definition of Reading	87
	The Relationship of Reading to Acting	87

CONTENTS—*Continued*

CHAPTER		PAGE
	1. The Arts Themselves	87
	2. The Artists Compared	88
	The Three Types of Presentation for the Reader	95
	1. Personating	95
	2. Impersonative Reading	95
	3. Pure Reading	96
	The Determining Factors in Making the Subdivisions	96
	1. The Author's Purpose	96
	2. The Literary Composition	97
	3. Method of Classifying a Selection Quickly	99
	General Limitations in Attitude and in Sex	101
	1. Bearing in Reading (Pure or Impersonative) Compared to Bearing in Personating	101
	2. Sex Limitation in Personating and in Reading	103
VIII	PERSONATING	105
	Definition Elaborated	105
	Type of Selection for Personating	105
	1. The Personation	105
	Vocal Features of Personating	112
	1. Voluntary Adaptation of Voice to Characterization	112
	a. Conscious Change in the Four Elements: Quality, Force, Pitch and Time	112
	b. Conscious Imitation of Speech Mechanics in Producing Dialects	115
	c. Conscious Imitation of Local and Provincial Speech	117

CONTENTS—*Continued*

CHAPTER		PAGE
	d. Conscious Imitation of Speech Defects	120
	e. Song Imitation	121
	2. Involuntary Change of Voice Expressing the Varying Moods	121
	Actional Features of Personating	122
	1. Literalness in All Action	122
	2. Technique of Action in Personating	124
	The Use of a Chair and Personal Properties	128
	Treatment of Personation within Personating	130
	The Treatment of Vocal Imitation within Personating	132
	The Use of Literal Song in Personating	133
	Relation of Personating to Impersonative Reading	134
IX	IMPERSONATIVE READING	135
	Definition Elaborated	135
	Type of Selection Suitable for Impersonative Reading	135
	1. The Character Reading	135
	Vocal Features of Impersonative Reading	137
	Actional Features of Impersonative Reading	137
	Stationary Position of the Reader in Impersonative Reading	140
	Treatment of Personation within Impersonative Reading	141
	Treatment of Vocal Imitation within Impersonative Reading	142
	The Use of Song in Impersonative Reading	143
	The Treatment of First Person Narrative	144

CONTENTS—*Continued*

CHAPTER		PAGE
X	PURE READING	146
	Definition Elaborated	146
	Type of Selecton for Pure Reading	147
	1. The Interpretative Reading	147
	Vocal Features of Pure Reading	148
	Actional Features of Pure Reading	150
	Treatment of Mood Representation within Normal Characterization	153
	Treatment of Vocal Imitation in Pure Reading	154
	The Suggestion of Song in Pure Reading	156
	First and Third Person Narrative	158
XI	THE VARIED TREATMENT OF TYPES	161
	Selections for Either Impersonative or Pure Reading	161
	Selections Unmistakable in Classification	162
	Selections Impossible to Classify as Readings	164
	1. The Burlesque	164
	2. The Inconsistent Composition	165
	3. Stunts, or Imitations	166
	4. Ventriloquism	166

PART THREE

METHOD OF STUDY

XII	GENERAL DISCUSSION	171
	Introductory Statement	171
	The Development of Human Expression	174
	The Development of the Art of Pure Reading	176
	The Law of Suggestive Action	178
	The Law of Vocal Changes	180

CONTENTS—*Continued*

CHAPTER		PAGE
XIII	SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY	182
	In the Play with Others	182
	In the Soliloquy Alone	184
	The Soliloquy for Personating	185
	The Monologue for Personating	187
	The Eccentric Address for Personating	188
	The Character Series for Personating	189
	The Character Soliloquy and the Character Monologue for Impersonative Reading	190
	The Character Play for Impersonative Reading	191
	The Character Narrative for Impersonative Reading	192
	Interpretative Readings, Including Subforms for Pure Reading	192
	How to Work out Any Selection for Public Presentation	193
XIV	CHOICE OF SELECTION	196
	The Student's Difficulty	196
	New Selections or Old	198
	Where to Find New Material	199
	How to Recognize Good Material for Adaptation	199
	Cutting the Selection	201
	Preparing the Selection for Delivery	202
XV	CHOICE OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING	208
	Introductory	208
	Suggested Course for the Actor	209
	Suggested Course for the Reader	210
	Suggested Course for the Public Speaker	210
	A Word about the Preliminary Courses	211

CONTENTS—*Concluded*

PAGE

APPENDIX 215
Definition of Class Types 215
1. The Artists Defined 215
2. The Arts Defined 216
3. Types of Literature Defined . 217
Definition of Voice and Action . . 219
1. Action Defined According to Bodily Zones 220
2. Action Defined According to its Literalness and Suggestiveness 221
3. Voice Defined 222
Definition of Forms of Composition . 222
Definition of Mood and Atmosphere . 224

PART ONE

Acting

THE ART OF ACTING AND PUBLIC READING

CHAPTER I

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Definition.—The term *acting* must not be confused with the term *action* which refers to all bodily expression including gesture, facial expression, poise and carriage. *Acting* is the art of presenting literature in the form of a Play or a Soliloquy. The characters are here assumed by an equal number of persons and are played in appropriate make-up, wigs, beards and costume while making use of essential properties and furniture in a setting of special scenery. The situations are made as realistic as possible with the aid of mechanical devices imitating wind, rain and thunder, together with the electrical appliances that furnish the different light effects.

In acting, as little as possible of detailed action is left to the imagination of the audience, for its purpose throughout is to make the scene *realistic,* although there are necessarily many elements that must make their appeal through the imagination. This is due to the fact that acting is an *art* instead of a *science.* A

good painting, no matter how detailed in execution, is art because it can only *approach* realism and can never be exact. A photograph is an exact reproduction impossible of accomplishment by human agency and is therefore not art but science. The ability to grasp all the *essential* details and omit non-essentials in reproducing different phases of life, whether in painting or in acting, constitutes *art,* but any means that can possibly reproduce these phases with exactness is science and can not be called art.

The imagination is called upon in acting, to suggest the passage of time. The lowering of the curtain, dark changes, change in the period or style of costume, or a change in the lighting effects are all means of suggesting to the audience the conception of minutes, hours, days, months or years which are supposed to have passed during the progress of the play.

The character of the scenery representing luxury or poverty; indoors or outdoors; summer, winter, spring or fall; the style and quality of the furniture; the taste of the decorations and the general coloring of the scene, stirs the imagination of the audience to a conception of definite location.

The unreality of the footlights and the absence of the fourth wall to an interior set stimulate the mind of the audience to imagine the whole scene, characters, dialogue and all to be, not within the narrow limits of a theater building, but out in the real world. Other appeals to the imagination are made through the backing sets to the exits, the adjoining room and out-of-doors; through the use of the telephone which induces

the audience to imagine a person at the other end of the wire, and through the mentioning of characters and events not actually represented before the audience. From these instances it may be seen that acting approaches the realistic representation of life but still retains hold on the imagination to a very great extent. It has chosen the essential details necessary to give a conception of real scenes and incidents and is therefore art.

Acting is art for another reason. The actor who can so admirably adjust himself to another's point of view that he can assume his likeness in action, make-up and speech, and adapt himself to the *essential* characteristics of the character in the dialogue, is an artist, for he has aroused the imagination to a point at which the auditor forgets he is listening to a play and for the time being believes he is witnessing a bit of actual life.

Relationship to Reading.—There has grown up a prevailing idea among literary students, particularly among those who make some attempt at the public reading of plays and classic literature, that *reading,* because it is suggestive, is much more worthy of the name *Art* than is *acting*. An audience is thought to be uplifted and ennobled if the imagination is appealed to, and since acting is realistic and does not constantly stimulate the faculty of imagination, it is not so high an art as reading. The error in this reasoning lies in the false assumption that acting can not be suggestive as well as realistic. Acting *is* suggestive, but in a different way.

Acting is just as essential to the ultimate building of suggestive power in reading as food is to the ultimate making of blood which feeds the brain and produces thought. There must first be a broad experience of realism before the mind can begin to create imaginative or ideal pictures. The individual who has the genius to adapt himself to other points of view and reproduce accurately the essential vocal and bodily expression of the character is as great an artist as the finished reader who has learned to play almost wholly upon the imagination. The two arts are different, but their difference lies in the manner of development. Acting is realistic in that it tries to reproduce every *essential* detail in order that the picture created may be to every one the same in degree of vividness or impressiveness. It is suggestive in its larger connotation to the auditor and in the fact that it actually brings out only essential details whereby the auditor can get the real picture without being obliged to accept the non-essentials. Acting does not require the scene to be actually in somebody's front yard or in the barroom of a New York dive, but it requires painted scenery to suggest these places. It does not go out on the city streets and bring in on the stage a real Italian organ grinder to represent "Mr. Antonio," nor does it conscript a country minister to give a life-like imitation of himself before the public, but it employs Otis Skinner and Ernest Elton to represent in essential detail these characters necessary to the play. There is realism, to be sure, and yet back of it all there is a great inherent suggestion.

The power of reading lies in the fact that by voice

and suggestive action it inspires in the minds of the audience the essential details of a theme sufficient to allow them to create their own complete picture and draw their own conclusions. Public reading, however, is impossible of accomplishment by one who has not first a real conception of what he wants to suggest so that he may choose the essentials necessary for imaginative inspiration. In order to be a great public reader, one must first be naturally a good actor, although he may know very little of the technique of acting. After a reader has been developed along the imaginative lines of his particular art, he very often becomes a poor actor because he has developed the suggestiveness at the expense of detailed realism. Conversely an accomplished and successful actor is rarely able to excel in the reader's art, because he has developed the detailed realism of acting at the expense of his suggestive powers. It is this one-sided development that causes so much inconsistency on the part of the actors and the so-called readers when they present their work for public approval.

The actor is always a character on the stage whether speaking or silent, and must always be doing something consistent with the character he represents. Great attention is paid to *apparently* trivial details of business. Every move is important. The picking up of a pin, the closing of a door, the lighting of a match, or the supposedly unconscious drumming of the foot on the floor; all these have a composite significance in making up the general effect of reality. But this fact must be remembered: nothing that is unessential may be brought in. Herein lies the art. If it were

true to life, the action would be burdened with a thousand accidental details that have no significance, and the time of playing would have to be exactly as long as actually living the story. In fact it would be impossible for human beings to reproduce with scientific accuracy even ten minutes of the life of one person; but an artist can choose the essential acts and movements of one person throughout a lifetime and reproduce them in the space of three hours on the stage. It is not, therefore, the *number* of details wrought in a piece of reproduction that makes it good or bad art, but in the *choice* of details. Again, to bring up a comparison, photography is scientifically exact because nature and not the human mind has accomplished it, but painting is artistically discriminating because the human mind is able to reproduce essential details.

Limit of Discussion.—In this discussion of acting no attempt is made to produce a professional guide-book for staging plays, but there will be an endeavor to give suggestions for training the student in acting to a sufficient extent that he may have his mind, body and voice thoroughly accustomed to being adapted to the expression of different points of view (characterization). Then, later in his study of Public Reading, he will have a fundamental experience upon which to build his more suggestive work. The discussion will not touch on make-up, costume, or scenery effects in detail, but will lay emphasis on literal action with properties, stage business, silent action and spoken lines including vocal characterization.

Types of Literature Suitable for Acting.—In

Part One, acting shall be discussed first, with regard to the Play in which two or more characters are in conversation, and second, with regard to the Soliloquy, or play written for one character only. The Soliloquy marks the natural transition point for the actor to develop into the reader. He still has practice in the use of properties and in literal action, but he has added one new note to his work—that of having the attention of the audience centered wholly upon himself.

CHAPTER II

THE PLAY

Definition.—The Play is a piece of literature written in pure dialogue form for two or more characters in which costume, make-up, properties and appropriate stage setting are employed, and in which as many persons as there are characters to be represented act. The Play, of course, may be *read* by one person, but it is referred to in this chapter solely as a vehicle for *acting*.

Kinds of Plays.—Plays are regarded as to their character under the head of farces, farce-comedies, comedies, comedy-dramas, dramas, tragedies and poetic dramas, and progress in their imaginative and connotative power proportionately from the farce to the poetic drama.

The Farce is an almost wholly surface play with no depth of thought or suggestion and with no appeal whatever to esthetic or ennobling motives. It abounds in exaggerated comedy and impossible situations which serve merely to entertain for a couple of hours and thereafter be forgotten. *The Magistrate,* by Pinero, and *Jane,* by Leskocq and Nicholls, are notable examples of the farce.

Farce-Comedy is one step in advance of the farce in that, while its situations are not actually impossible, yet they are highly improbable, so that the humor

resulting is as exaggerated as that of the farce. *The Great Adventure,* by Arnold Bennet, is an example of the farce-comedy. While it might be said that the farce-comedy does leave something for the auditor to think about, it is nevertheless, like the farce, essentially lacking in appeal to any of the higher feelings.

The Comedy makes a decided step in advance in its appeal to real lasting thought. It is not exaggerated. The situations are, of course, unusual, but not at all improbable, and the humor is so compelling that it is at once uplifting and connotative of beauty and of the real joy of life. It stirs not deeply but gently and is much more far-reaching in its imaginative influence than many who are more sober-minded are willing to admit. The comedy is more difficult to present than either the farce-comedy or the farce, for to bring out the essentials of humor in life without overdoing and employing a number of accidentals requires the highest type of art. To play a tragic rôle does not demand more discriminating ability, and it is easier to tell the culture of an actor through the quality of his humor than through the power of his pathos or his magnetic appeal to the sentiments. The comedy then, has much to do with the imagination and it is therefore the best of all types for the early student's study and practice. *The Fortune Hunter* and *The Boomerang,* both by Winchell Smith, are notable examples of pure comedy.

The Comedy-Drama is a pleasantly humorous play, with a mildly amusing plot balanced by serious thought and sympathetic mood. The humor is present

to relieve the otherwise serious mood rather than to be amusing for its own sake. Its imaginative appeal is to the sentiments and its connotative power produces many lasting impressions. The comedy-drama may have an uplifting mission and may therefore be regarded as possessing distinct virtues for the student who has ambition to become a public reader. It gives opportunity for the development in another direction, namely, toward sympathetic emotion, while still retaining the appreciation for the niceties of humor. *Mice and Men,* by Madeline Lucette Ryley, is a splendid example of this type of play.

The Drama is a serious play. While it may have touches of humor (it really ought to, for a play without humor is depressing and on the whole does not leave so strong an impression) its plot and purpose are serious. The appeal is to the deeper natures of men and affords great opportunity for the imagination of the auditors. In this type of play, the problems, sorrows and disappointments of life have their expression and are therefore more keenly connotative to the average listener than the joys, and the unexpected pleasures of life, for they come closer to the ordinary experiences. It is easier to make an average audience weep than to make it laugh. Notable examples of the serious play are *The Passing of the Third Floor Back, Kindling, The Truth* and *The Thief.* All these have remarkable connotative power.

The Tragedy is a pathetic play in which the extreme of the serious emotions are portrayed. It usually teaches a powerful lesson and, because of its warning,

gives great opportunity for imaginative effect. It is the most powerful of dramas and should not be attempted by students until they have had plenty of experience in the milder forms of plays. Many public readers and actors fail at the beginning because they make the mistake of trying to do what is beyond their experience to understand. *Othello* or *Hamlet* or *Lear* may be wonderfully acted by Mantell, Sothern or Faversham, or read by two or three of our veteran readers, but it is a mistake for the young reader to attempt tragedies in public.

The Poetic Drama is a highly idealized play written in meter. It is the most imaginative of all plays and is very often given with as much power as a reading as when fully acted out in a complete setting. Such a play rarely requires much action or use of properties, for its purpose is so obviously to produce thought and emotional connotation that properties become almost purely accidental. There are, in fact, many such plays which lose much of their beauty when presented in a regular setting with properties and costumes. Tennyson's *The Falcon* and *Becket* are much more suitable for reading than for acting. *Everywoman,* by Browne, makes a wonderful reading, but its author has worked out so ingeniously the action in the various settings that when acted it loses nothing, but rather adds new and clearer values which offer in turn new connotations.

Limit of Discussion.—Other classifications of the play might be given such as the Melodrama, an exaggerated, serious play with improbable situations;

Vaudeville Sketches; Ventriloquial Stunts, etc., but they have no place here. There are, of course, the musical plays which approach the ideal of high imagination through progression from the Burlesque, Musical Comedy, Comic Opera and Light Opera to Grand Opera, but this discussion is concerned solely with the dramatic phase of the art and will not trespass upon the musical field.

Technique of Presentation.—From the standpoint of a finished production, there are several avenues of criticism open to the Director of plays when he is producing a performance, in a regularly equipped theater, for which an admission price is charged.

(1.) The Setting. In the first place the scenery must have been selected to represent as closely as possible the period, the season of the year, the locality and the condition of environment. Special attention should have been given to the grouping of the furniture in the scene so that each room or set maintains a natural and livable aspect. The chairs should look as if they had been as unconsciously placed without special reference to any one of the four walls—as they would look in a real living-room. If the chairs all face the audience at right angles they produce the same effect on a careful observer that any actual sitting-room would make if all the chairs faced primly in one direction. There is, of course, this difference between the real room and the stage set; while a real room should be the model for a stage dressing, yet the art of decorating for the stage is manifested in the placing of the furniture so that it does not seem at all

stiff and conventional but at the same time keeps its general direction toward the audience. This effect is sometimes acquired by placing one or two unused chairs up stage at an angle nearly opposite to some of the down-stage chairs. One of the first things that marks a production as amateurish and permits an air of tolerance to settle on the faces of a patronizing public, is the stiff, prim arrangement of the furniture.

One way of eliminating the stiffness of effect in the grouping of furniture is to place the pieces first just as straight and conventionally as possible with every piece at right angles to the footlights. Then the director should walk across the stage, giving a shove here and a push there in haphazard angles until every piece has been moved. After seeing how the grouping looks from the front, he should repeat the operation several times, trying the distances and angles until the room looks like a real one. The furniture used most by the characters should be placed down stage and rather near the center, leaving the up stage for silent and unobtrusive action. No exact rule can be given for the placing of furniture but the practised eye of the director who has observed different arrangements in real homes will enable him to bring about any effect he wants.

(2.) Kinds of Furniture. In selecting furniture for the scene the director must be careful to see that it is appropriate in period and quality, and that it is consistent with the atmosphere. To play a kitchen scene in a richly furnished parlor set or a ballroom scene furnished with wooden chair and an old work bench

would, of course, hardly be permitted by even the most inexperienced of directors, but there are subtler distinctions that need consideration. A fireplace, for instance, may be perfectly proper in a scene, but if it is apparently going full blast in a situation supposed to occur in the middle of July, it is too much to expect that a few bright minds in the audience will not detect the inconsistency and spread the news to the rest of the audience. The wall decorations, bric-à-brac and paintings should be in keeping with the spirit of the scene and the nature of the characters occupying the surroundings. A truly artistic director will pay great attention to the appropriate coloring of the scene and see that the furniture and upholstery is in keeping.

(3.) Properties. After seeing that the set is complete the next care of the director is to know that all the essential properties are in place for instant use and that they are consistent with the period, locality and season. One of the ludicrous blunders often made on the amateur stage is seen in the appearance of a young woman in furs with snowflakes dotting her apparel, followed by a young man wearing a straw hat! Another inconsistency is noticed in the use of a stylish electric lamp at a period when candles were used exclusively. Attention to such little details is necessary to the fulfilment of the author's purpose in giving the play to the public. The least inconsistency often creates an atmosphere that destroys the impression of reality and thus hinders the broader connotative influence of the play. The director should be sure that each actor is responsible for every property that he is

personally concerned with, such as letters, newspapers, fountain pen, watch, handkerchief, eye-glass, cigarette case or anything that is not a general property, or that is used in common on the stage by all the actors. *(4.) Grouping of Characters.* Careful grouping of the characters on the stage is most essential in order to keep what is known as "balance." The action should never be centered for any length of time on one corner of the stage while the rest of the stage is unoccupied. The center and down stage if possible is always reserved for the most important situations and action in the scene. The silent actors and supernumerary groups are placed in informal but balanced positions up stage and at the sides. These groups should never remain long in the same positions but should shift about unostentatiously in order to give the impression of unstudied movement and poise. Groups up stage should not all stand or sit facing the audience (unless, of course, their attention is supposed to be upon those occupying the center). All should be doing something or conversing in pantomime. It is not necessary here to speak in detail of the correct standing, sitting or reclining positions on the stage. All this has been effectively set forth in various guide-books of stage technique. It is enough to say that the director must see to it that good postures are formed and such harmony of action maintained that no group either silent or speaking, stationary or in motion, shall attract attention to itself without being related to the atmosphere of the scene. *(5.) Mechanical Effects.* Another important part

It is directly opposite in effect to the dark blue, or mystery light for the white is frankly supernatural and the blue suggests material mystery or suspense. For instance, a graveyard scene at night may be played in dark blue light, but a scene representing a dream in which one talks with spirits or fairies or angels should be played in white light.

Light green is restful in its influence and, while it is rarely used alone, it becomes most effective in its modulation from the yellows and ambers of daylight into the twilight green, the purple light of reflected sunset and finally the dark blue of night.

Light blue is the best color for moonlight with all its charms of sentiment. It has enough of the blue to make mystery enchanting and enough of the green to make it restful. Because it is the light that inspires romance, the love scene played in moonlight is most convincing in its effect upon an audience.

Red light, usually made effective through a fireplace or red-shaded lamps, gives a luxurious, sensuous impression—rather Bohemian and unrestrained. It is the light that inflames physical passions—anger, lust and revenge. A setting wholly in red light should not be permitted unless the scene is intensely physical, and even then the presence of too much red light is apt to give the scene a sordidness that approaches vulgarity. Rightly used, however, red light may be very effective by way of contrast and warmth of situation.

Orange light is the vulgar light. It combines the red light of uncontrolled nature with the yellow light of brilliancy which seems to give a brazenness and

flamboyancy to physical passions. It is the light of the barroom and the brothel, and when employed gives a characteristically uncultured and lawless atmosphere to the scene.

All these various effects are accomplished through footlights, overhead lights, floods, bunch-lights and spotlights from the wings or back of the theater. Many modern theaters are trying to do away with footlights altogether, since they make a rather unnatural light which proceeds from below upward and gives unnatural shadows to the face, if the actor is too near them. Their original usefulness lay in dispelling all shadows, so that the artificial shadows made by dark grease paint to represent wrinkles together with light colored paint for the high lights would have the same effect from all points of the stage. These lights, balanced by overhead and wing lights, gave a greater illusion to the painted scenery and did away with shadows cast by the actors in walking about the stage. By the skilful use of overhead, wing and tormentor lights, many up-to-date theaters are successfully lighting their stages and at the same time doing away with the unsatisfactory footlights. The spotlight from the rear, or from overhead at the side when focussed in a flood covering the whole stage is the best effect for moonlight. It is well to say right here that a spotlight from the rear of the building should never be focussed on any one of the characters in an ordinary play. It is unreal and inconsistent with material laws to have any person in a scene surrounded by a halo of light while she pathetically rocks the little orphan to sleep

or says her prayers by the little white iron bed! The focussed spotlight is for musical comedy or fancy plays and should not be employed in the legitimate drama.

It is the director's business further to see that the operators of the stage effects should know their business cues and work simultaneously with the actor's lines and business. It is discouraging for the actor to walk up to a table and blow out a couple of candles, saying as he does so, "Out goes the light!" and then be obliged to walk half-way to his exit before the stage hand gets around to dim the lights. Every effect should be exactly on time; the bell should ring at the proper instant, the lights dim or go out at the appointed cue and the thunder crash in its turn. An instant's delay causes the audience to lose its hold on the spell of the scene. The director must impress these facts on the minds of his assistants and then see that the business is rehearsed until it is right.

(7.) Concerning Make-up and Costumes. The director should superintend the make-up and costuming of the characters for the production. Granted that the student may have had a thorough course in the theory and practice of make-up, it is best for the director to assure himself that all make-up and costumes are consistent with the age, complexion, nationality, position and condition of environment of the character to be represented. The judgment of beginners and even of some professionals can not be trusted always to be sound in deciding what is the proper make-up and dress for certain occasions. The young women of the

cast invariably want to look pretty whether their character is supposed to be so or not, and the director has to be constantly alert or in some dark hour he will observe what is intended to be a homely old maid, stalk on the stage in the gorgeous make-up and costume of an eighteen-year-old débutante!

Before proceeding to the next topic concerning general stage business, it may be well briefly to review the actor's situation as he steps upon the stage in appropriate costume and make-up, amid scenery representing as realistically as possible the condition, season and location in which he is to speak his lines. He must assume the voice, bearing and eccentricity, if any, of the character he portrays. Everything that is to be handled, such as dishes, food, books, papers, letters, etc., must be there in its proper place. The scene, if an interior, represents a room enclosed by three walls. The fourth wall is transparent through which the audience is permitted to see and hear what is going on. In this setting the actor walks, runs, sits, reclines, kneels, plays the piano and in fact does with an exactness and precision the hundred and one little acts that would be observed if, instead of a stage, it were a real private room and the actor in a real situation. While these little things are done apparently in the same way, there is still a big difference between this and what it would be in real life. The accidentals and the unobservable details are left out and only the essentials acted. In real life the words spoken, the little movements, the exits, the entrances, together with a multitude of unrelated acts and speeches, are

spontaneous and unforeseen in any arranged space of time. On the stage the actor knows in advance everything he has to do and say, and it is his art to do it *as if* it were spontaneous, and as unconcernedly as if he were not being watched by three thousand pairs of eyes. Art enters into the writing of the play when the author so skilfully connects dialogue and situation with essential actions that gaps in time are bridged and the whole story gives the impression of detail and completion.

In producing the play all the actors must lend to the same effect and keep consistent with the author's purpose.

CHAPTER III

THE PLAY (*Continued*)

Technique of Presentation (*continued*).—(8) *General Stage Business.* Stage business refers to the action accompanying the speaking of lines; the walking and moving about stage; the handling of properties, furniture or other characters while in view of the audience, and the action when silent or in pantomimic conversation with others. *General stage business* means the larger moves that must be accomplished in common with the others upon the stage. *Detailed stage business* refers to the individual actions not especially in common with the others.

Naturally the first care of the director is to see that the entrances are made effectively. A poor entrance often destroys the spirit of the whole scene. Even an unimportant character must take pains to enter well, for a misstep or an awkward move may detract from the attention that should be given to others upon the stage. Of course, the situation and type of character represented will vary the manner of entrance but there are general rules to observe which affect any kind of an entrance. Even if a character is supposed to stub his toe on the threshold, he must do it artistically. *All* entrances must be *"on the cue"* and must not show hesitancy or wavering between an impulse to step in and an impulse to wait an instant. The actor must

not linger in sight of the audience, waiting for his cue. He must be just *out of sight,* ready to step in sight the moment his cue is given. All entrances should be purposeful. Even though the character is supposed to enter aimlessly, the actor must be purposeful in the aimlessness. In other words, the actor himself must be *on the alert* at his entrance whatever the character he represents. There must be purpose and precision in every move. A small man may make just as effective an entrance as a large man. He must never be conscious of disadvantage because of his stature. If he holds up his chest and steps firmly with head erect, the audience will never think of him as being short. The whole secret of effective entrance lies in the fact that the actor must know exactly how and when he is to enter and *be conscious* of it at the time. In his previous action he may have so registered his emotions and vocal changes that he is no longer conscious of them, but he must *always* be conscious of his entrances. They are too important to be entrusted to habit, for the actor giving the cue may have varied the tempo or the action accompanying his speech so that the situation is changed ever so slightly. If so, the alert actor waiting the cue will adjust his entrance accordingly, but if he has merely registered the habit of this particular entrance, he may make an error. Individual emotions and actions, and actions that have no immediate relation to the other characters may be and ought to be registered by thorough practice until the whole expression becomes subconscious, but in all cases where careful "team-work" is necessary alert con-

sciousness of expression is important. This may not apply to every case of professional acting, but it surely applies to beginners. Much of a director's trouble in the beginning has to do with the timing of entrances and exits.

It may seem at first that the exit is less important than the entrance, but this is not true. The actor must study to make an effective exit just as he studies his entrances. There are added problems in making an exit which do not arise in making an entrance. For instance, an actor often must make an exit while he is speaking to some one in the opposite direction from the door. He must judge the distance and the *exact* location of the door while apparently giving his entire attention to his lines and particular business. If he miscalculates and finds himself about to walk into a mirror or through a window it is embarrassing and may spoil a scene. A purposeful exit is as important as a purposeful entrance, in fact, the impression one leaves behind is often *more* important than the impression one makes at the beginning. Of course, there are accidents which may happen at any time, but the audience is quick to detect an accident due to mere carelessness. It is also as quick to notice presence of mind on the part of an actor in averting disaster. The following illustration is an admirable example of the latter case.

A popular actress had been rehearsing a scene for some time in which she was to make an exit at the door upper left. On the evening of the performance a clumsy stage mechanic set a window in place of the

door. Unfortunately the director did not notice the mistake, so when the actress entered from the right she made her way to the occupant of the room and keeping her eyes on him while speaking, walked diagonally up stage toward the door, as she supposed. The action was such that she was unable to take her eyes from her companion until about to step out the door. She had gauged the distance and position correctly, and as she turned to sweep magnificently out the door she discovered instead a window about two feet above the floor. It happened to be an open window so, without a moment's hesitation, as gracefully as possible she stepped over the sill, saying as she did so, "I'll go out by way of the garden." Her presence of mind and the open window saved the situation. Of course, the audience knew it was a mistake, but the young woman's alertness and resource in the emergency was so thoroughly appreciated that the scene was not at all affected and the mistake in a few minutes was forgotten by every one except the actress herself—and incidentally the clumsy stage hand.

One of the most important pieces of general stage business is what is termed "crossing." Prompt books are full of directions marked "X" to indicate the point in the dialogue where the actor is to cross from one position to another. "X—right" or "X—left" directs the actor to move to the right or to the left of the stage, but these comments do not aid the director in determining just how far to the right or left or in what particular direction, up stage or down stage, is meant. It is just as well that they do not, for the

director must learn to be independent and use his own judgment. The director who is a slave to the printed prompt book is *lost!* He must make his own pictures and plan his own directions for his individual interpretation of the play. He must be his own judge of how far and just at what point his actors must make these crosses. The reason for these movements is to avoid conventionality and stiffness which would result from actors speaking too long a time from the same position. The crosses give life and reality to the conversations. Detail business may be left until later rehearsals, but these general moves and crosses are imperative at the very first, and it is absolutely essential to the success of the play that the lines or business on which every cross is to be made should be systematically planned by the director before meeting his cast for the first rehearsal.

Moves are not properly called "crosses" unless the actor is to pass the center of the stage in going from one side to the other or unless he crosses in front of another actor, but the term is loosely used to indicate any movement in walking from any part of the stage to another. Actors are directed to cross *up right* or *down left* or *right center* or *left center,* indicating approximately the position they are to establish during a certain speech or piece of business, and it is for the director to determine just where the exact position is. The author of the play may have instructed the actor to sit by the fireplace, but if the director says "stand by the victrola" the wise actor will not have to be told a second time.

Much could be said about the different kinds of crosses, but it is only necessary here to give a general caution or two. Care must be taken that no cross is made in front of an actor who is speaking at that moment. The character speaking may cross in front of the silent actor, however. When one character has passed in front of another, the other should "take stage," or move slightly in the opposite direction to give balance to the positions. This must be done unostentatiously so that the audience will not be conscious of the movement.

One of the difficulties arising from the crosses is the tendency of the beginner to fix his eye on the spot he is to occupy and then make a dive for it the moment his cue comes. Another tendency is to *back up* to the place if he didn't happen to hit it the first time he made the plunge. The director must impress upon the student the necessity of practising until he walks easily and naturally to the spot in accordance with what seems to be a normal and spontaneous impulse to move. In crossing up stage some beginners are under the impression that it is wrong to turn the back upon the audience so they walk backward or sidewise and even back out of an exit. Others think they must move in straight lines across the floor whether there happens to be furniture in the path or not. Common sense is the safest guide for any director in handling these problems. Any move that looks awkward in real life will look awkward on the stage. An unnatural turn or twist of the body will look unnatural on the stage. The director must drill and drill until every

move appears spontaneous and unstudied. There are rules and rules given by various stage manuals, such as "Always stand with the up-stage foot slightly in advance of the other" or "Never speak up stage with the back turned squarely toward the audience," but these rules have so many exceptions that it is scarcely worth while to make the rules. It is, of course, best to keep the face toward the audience whenever it does not interfere with the making of a consistent stage picture. The director must always watch for stage balance, life and spontaneity of movement, and variety in grouping.

In watching the conversation between two people, there are two things which the director must observe; the attitude of the speaker and that of the listener. The speaker must realize that he is not addressing an audience, but that he is talking to somebody *about something*. In other words, he must understand the meaning of his lines and at the same time feel an interest in their effect upon his hearer. The listener, on the other hand, must not appear as if he were waiting for a cue. He must be taught how to listen and show response in his glance, in the movement of his hands or in other bodily expression. He must be ready to interrupt on the instant of his cue and yet appear as if the interruption were spontaneous. He must be able to listen according to the mood of the character he is representing and must show the attitude in his whole bodily expression. For beginners the listening part is much more difficult than the speaking part. It is so hard for them to understand

that it is just as important to keep in the characterization while not speaking as while speaking.

In general conversation, where there are supposed to be several people talking at once, the center of attention shifts alternately from one group or couple to another group as the conversation becomes audible. The group carrying on the audible conversation of course holds the center of attention, but the other groups must continue in pantomimic conversation and not stand, like clothing-store models, immovable and staring, waiting for the cue to the audible speech. The attitude of listening here is just as important for the pantomimic conversation as it is for those who are the center of attention in audible speech. If the couples or groups are standing, they should shift and change formations in order to give the appearance of a real formal gathering, moving about and exchanging conversations.

When one person is addressing the others *formally,* it is best for the speaker to remain on one side and a little up stage while his little audience is grouped on the other side and down stage unless the effect of the speech upon the listeners is important rather than the action of the speaker himself. When one is speaking *informally* to the others he may be seated or standing near the center of the stage, while the others, listening, are grouped in balanced positions about the stage. If the speech is animated or intense while the speaker is standing, it is usually best for him to maintain the center of the stage as nearly as possible, while the others crowd around him on either side but not di-

rectly in front of him. The important address should be so arranged that the speaker faces the audience.

Business at the dining table needs a word of explanation in regard to the seating of the characters, the handling of dishes and the pantomime of eating. The important characters should be seated up stage and facing the audience while those having little to do or say in the scene may have their backs to the audience. A circular table is better than a square one, for the space nearest the audience may be unoccupied without giving an unnatural look to the situation. Four people seated at a square table look stiff and unnatural if two are seated at the back and one at each end, leaving the side toward the audience empty. This arrangement, however, is sometimes necessary when the scene demands an old-fashioned kitchen table, and the leading character's action is such that no one can be placed between him and the audience. It is important that the servants in a dinner scene be trained to serve and accomplish every detail of their business on exact cues and with a quietness that will detract nothing from the business of the more important characters. If the servants are the leading characters, of course this does not apply. The actor at the table must give the impression of eating, drinking, etc., while carrying on his part in the conversation either audibly or in pantomime. He must know when he is to stir his coffee, when to put in the sugar or cream and on what line to do any of the significant bits of business. He should never really eat much of the food, but he must pantomime so that the audience

thinks he is actually eating. He may pantomime chewing occasionally, and it may be necessary to take a small portion of the food, but in most cases the pantomime is sufficient and the actor is free from possible accident, such as having something in his mouth the instant he should be speaking clearly.

Other significant business, such as moving furniture or handling chairs, demands the attention of the director. It is very often important that the position of a chair be changed in the middle of a scene for later convenience of business. The director should plan in advance at just what point the change should be made and who should make it. Care must be taken that the action does not look foreseen on the part of the actor. Like all other moves it must appear spontaneous. If the business looks stilted, it is the duty of the director to rehearse it until the stiffness is overcome. A lady should never attempt to move a chair with one hand and even a gentleman should employ both hands whenever possible. It takes away the appearance of effort and helps the spontaneity of the scene.

Writing letters while dictating their contents or while taking dictation from another should be accomplished by the rapid pantomime of writing across the page during *perceptible pauses* in the dictation. If the person writing is supposed to be a stenographer, there need be no pause in the writing or the dictation.

In reading aloud from a letter or a newspaper there should be a significant change in the manner of utterance. It should not be delivered with the spontaneity

of impromptu speech, but on the other hand should be read with some irregular pauses and a monotony of pitch and color, just as the majority of untrained readers read from the printed page. It is a good plan to have the matter already written on the sheet in order to assist in giving the mechanical effect of ordinary reading, but it is not altogether safe to depend upon its being written. The lines should have been memorized the same as the speeches to insure against the accidental misplacing of the right sheet on the night of the performance.

Telephone business requires the speaker to reflect his mood as he listens to imaginary replies, or talks into the instrument. It is well to construct mentally just what the replies are to be so that the response in facial expression may be consistent with the one-sided dialogue and so that sufficient pauses may suggest the speaker at the other end of the line.

Looking out the window, signaling, calling or viewing scenery must all be prompted by the imagination of the actor who should visualize the suggested objects of his action. For instance, in calling out of a window supposed to be four or five stories from the street, the speaker must actually see farther down than the floor of the stage behind the scene or his voice will not get the proper suggestive pitch for the distance or direction. In looking at an imaginary sunset (not visible to the audience) through a window at the right of the stage and near the front, the actor must *see a sunset* in the distance, and not allow his focus to stop at the stage mechanic three feet away

preparing to dim the lights. He must see beyond the reality, or the audience will not fully imagine the sunset. Of course, the audience can not actually discern the focus of the actor's eyes, but the sum total of his attitude will either make or spoil the effect, and if he actually imagines a sunset, his body will respond to the imagery in such a way as to make his audience *think* he sees it.

Action near the footlights must be more carefully worked out than up-stage business, as a rule, because it is more conspicuous. Up-stage business, however, when *especially* significant must be made conspicuous by a little more than usual ostentation in order to draw the attention habitually directed to down-stage action.

The manner of falling, rising, reclining, lifting, carrying, kneeling, sitting and ordinary walking are points often neglected, but which are of such great importance in themselves and are so easy to be acquired that no director can afford to overlook them. It is impossible to describe satisfactorily in writing just how to accomplish these important movements, but a hint or suggestion may be helpful to the director who has not had the opportunity of technical instruction.

In the first place the walk of an actor must correspond to the nature of the character he is assuming. Let him observe types and strive to imitate the walk. A normal walk is energetic and positive, the heels striking the floor first and the knee straight at all times until the moment of lifting and carrying the leg

forward. Any bend of the knee after the foot has been planted gives an unstability to the walk. The chest should be kept up and the back of the neck pressed against an imaginary collar button. By mastering this erect position and walk, even a short man may appear tall and commanding. In sitting or reclining the position is governed normally by its looks from the front of the stage. If the positions are awkward or stiff, the director should keep suggesting slightly different attitudes until the desired effect is obtained—then the actor is told to remain in the position until he "gets the feel of it." Then he is requested to get up, walk across the stage and back and resume the position. A few suggestions and a few repetitions of the correct assuming of position will fix the impression in the motor memory, so that automatically thereafter the student will drop into the correct posture. A little more care is needed in coaching the novice to fall without making himself ridiculous or doing bodily harm to himself. If he falls and appears to pick out a soft spot on which to land the audience will smile at his amateurishness. If he abandons all care for himself on the other hand or falls heavily, he runs a risk of remaining longer in the pose than his part in the play requires—if he should happen to hurt himself. There is only one way in which to fall so that it looks real to the audience, and at the same time will not even bruise the actor. He should fall straight downward, perpendicularly, relaxing the knees first and allowing the calf of the leg to receive the first shock which is in turn distributed to the thigh, the

shoulders and the head as the waist and the neck in their turn relax. The head receives no shock at all, but the combined effect is a complete fall. In being struck or shot, or in fainting, this same method is employed most impressively. In lifting one who has fallen, the same care must be taken, that no opportunity for laughter may be given the audience. Let us assume that the figure is lying with the head toward the right of the stage. The actor who is to lift it kneels on the left knee just back of the prostrate form, and with the right hand places the left arm of the figure on its breast, grasping with the left the upper arm of the figure and giving a sharp pull up, at the same time placing his right arm around the shoulder of the now upright figure. Then with the right knee at the back of the figure he rises, seemingly lifting the dead weight. The relaxation of the figure must be in the neck and waist and arms, but the weight is actually sustained on the bent legs. In carrying the dead weight, the actor should put one arm of the figure around his neck and appear literally to bear the weight as he goes off the stage. It is better whenever possible to have one or two people assist in carrying the apparently unconscious member of the cast off the stage, and the director should see that the extra people get between the prostrate figure and the audience so that all the irregularities of the exit may be covered.

(9.) Detailed Business. By detailed business is meant the individual business of one actor independent of the others. The handling of individual proper-

ties (hat, coat, gloves, cane or umbrella), the smoking of a pipe, cigar or cigarette; the pouring out and drinking of beverages—all have their particular freedom or limitation in the economy of acting.

All *general business* or "team-work" among the actors has to be exactly timed and therefore requires more rehearsing than the detailed business which allows a little more freedom on the part of the individual actor, yet even in this freedom there are some limitations. All individual moves must be consistent with the type of character and the nature of the dialogue, and a great many movements must be as accurately timed as the general business, but there are numberless little actions which are necessary that are not in any way connected with the dialogue, and which may be accomplished at the discretion of the actor if he is experienced. The beginner had best confine himself to the business suggested by the director, until he is thrown upon his own resources. However, even a beginner may be permitted to knock the ashes off his cigar, or toy with a knife and fork at the table without being told *exactly* the word of the conversation on which to act, provided such action does not disturb the effect of the dialogue or other business. It is well to encourage originality on the part of the students, but when there is a tendency to create business just for the sake of being original and calling attention to himself, then the director must point out the inconsistency and show what may and may not be permitted. The director must pay great attention to the facial expression and gesture, as well as to the attitude and

general bearing of the actor. After the general business is pretty well worked out and the detailed business ready to be suggested, the director must begin systematically to drill on the speaking of lines, as they accompany the business, and the expression of the mood in face and gesture. This training should not be left until the last, for it is imperative that the association of actions with the interpretation of the lines and the bodily expression of the motion, be accomplished as an aid to perfect memory of the whole work. Any tendency on the part of the student to speak with his back to the audience except when speaking up stage should be corrected at the beginning, for it is easier to teach him when he *may* talk with his back to the audience than to show him over and over again the countless times when he *must not.* There is one difficulty, however, which arises from giving the student the general rule, "not to turn the back on the audience while speaking." He often takes it so literally that in carrying on a conversation with another standing opposite him, he will stand squarely facing the audience and talk to the other character over his shoulder, after the manner of a Sunday-School dialogue on Children's Day. Usually good results can be obtained by telling the beginner first to walk up to the other character and talk to him just as if they had met in the street. Next, he should walk back to where he was originally standing, and start again as though he were going to repeat the performance, but as soon as he has turned, the director should tell him to stop and say his speech from that position. He will then

be in the most natural position for conversation from these two points.

(10.) Individual License in Business. The director will do well to remember that very little liberty of subjective pantomime should be allowed to the beginner, for his judgment will in most cases be very poor. His self-consciousness will prevent spontaneity and ease of movement and he must pay so much attention to minute instructions concerning general and detailed business that he is incapable of thinking for himself. He must even be told repeatedly the same piece of business, before he gets it associated with his line and mood, so it is better not to expect much freedom on his part at first. As he becomes familiar with his lines and business and acquires more and more confidence in himself, he may be told to work out business for himself. He should always be cautioned to keep his individual business consistent with the situation and the purpose of the play.

At every rehearsal, the business should be repeated exactly as it was given before. No variations should go uncensured and no changes with business be made unless the student is told of the change. He must be told to watch the director closely while a piece of business is being given for his imitation.

(11.) Silent Acting. Probably the most difficult thing for the amateur to learn is the *silent acting*. He may be talented, and he may be a real genius when it comes to acting while speaking lines, but when some one else is doing the talking, he seems to lose interest in the affair. Sometimes he goes to the other extreme

and introduces some original silent acting that will take the attention from the others to whom the attention rightly belongs. It is for the director to see that only such action as he suggests, is introduced.

There are two distinct types of silent acting, which may be called respectively—unobtrusive and aggressive.

(a.) UNOBTRUSIVE SILENT ACTING. *Unobtrusive* silent acting is the acting of the members of the cast who are in the scene but for the time being are not an integral part of it. The maid or the butler, dusting or cleaning off the table while a conversation is going on between two of the chief characters, or the pantomimic conversation and action of a company of people at a reception while other members of the cast are holding the center of attention, are good examples of what should be unobtrusive silent acting. One person reading a newspaper silently while others converse is another example. In such a situation, the amateur is prone to relax and sit like so much furniture, until his cue comes, whereupon he is instantly galvanized into the most active participation. The student must learn to act unobtrusively. He must be alive to the situation every instant, although he may be required to sit up stage with his back to the audience for half the scene or more. While the attention of the audience must not be *drawn* to him, yet it will unconsciously *rest* on him every once in a while and it is quick to distinguish inertness or lack of participation even in a silent and apparently unmovable pose. This type of silent acting is more difficult to develop than the ag-

gressive type, for the amateur either fails to appreciate the importance of keeping his character whether he is noticed or not, or else he thinks his acting must constantly call attention to himself. It is the director's business to watch minutely the pose, action and facial expression of the silent actor.

(b.) AGGRESSIVE SILENT ACTING. *Aggressive* silent acting is necessarily more detailed and accurate, for it includes all the movements, facial expression and subjective action of the silent actor when he is the center of attention or in direct association with the center of attention. It is the action performed while alone in the scene, or while with another who is at the moment doing the talking. It includes the attitude, facial expression and subjective gesture of the actor while listening intently to another in an active part of the scene.

This aggressive silent acting differs from the unobtrusive type in that it is being constantly under observation and has to do with the vital parts of the scene, while the other is merely the necessary action to make the scene live as a unit and not look stiff or unreal. The aggressive type needs perfect timing to cues, while the other need not be so accurate.

(12.) The Speaking of Lines. Perhaps one of the most noticeable differences between the work of recognized artists and that of second-rate players, is in the speaking of lines. College amateurs with no experience whatever, but with careful drilling by a competent director, are noticeably better in their reading of the lines, than the great majority of small company pro-

fessionals. The competent college or high-school director is careful to analyze the thought of the lines and see that proper emphasis is placed, while the average second-rate professional director is incapable of thought discrimination, although he may be endowed with emotional ability and originality in suggesting stage business.

A college or high-school student who has brains enough to keep up with his classes, is better material to work on than the average second-class professional when it comes to teaching the speaking of lines. The beginner, therefore, should be told at the outset that he is not regarded as an *amateur* in *reading lines,* but that on the other hand he is already supposed to be more capable than the average stage professional. In action, however, he must understand that he is as a child and must be taught from the beginning. Keep the amateur idea away from the beginner. Call him a "beginner" but not an "amateur." The latter word has a tendency to discourage him at the very start and gives excuse for more mistakes than are necessary. Why should college directors of theatricals be content to have their efforts called "amateur," when so much worse acting is seen about the country, in the name of professional acting? The college director belittles himself and the cause of education when he admits that his instruction can only produce amateur results alongside an untutored, unlettered garage assistant who suddenly finds himself endowed by nature to personate a farmer and by proper business foresight is able to put himself at the head of a stock

company which tours the small towns and even the cities as a professional organization.

The director should see to it that his students think well of themselves and their ability, as long as they are willing to be taught. In the first reading rehearsal he should make clear to the cast that he expects perfect attention and obedience to suggestions, as well as confidence in their own ability to carry the suggestions out. Then, in the reading of the lines, careful attention should be given to the exact meaning, and errors in pronunciation and emphasis corrected. Monotony and conventionality of reading may be prevented at the first rehearsal so that no bad habits of utterance are established. Every beginner in acting should have had a preliminary course in interpretation of the printed page, and a course in voice training. If the student has not had these courses, the director will have a more difficult task, and he must keep vigilant at all times for mistakes in interpretation.

It is also well at the outset to correct if possible, all those provincial atrocities of speech recognized in the Bostonian attempt to effect English pronunciation of the final "r," or the New Yorker's less successful imitation which reaches its greatest absurdity in the Bowery newsboy's "Thi(e)ty-thi(e)d Street." Correct English should be substituted for all dialogue except eccentric or special provincial characterizations. "Keep the speech as real as the acting" is a good rule.

Usually beginners either address themselves directly to the audience or ignore it entirely in speaking the lines. If they have been in plays before, they may

have been told not to talk up stage or turn their backs to the audience. If this arbitrary rule has been given and taken literally, the student is apt to go to the other extreme and, facing the audience squarely, address the audience as if talking to it instead of to himself or the others in the scene. Rather than talk up stage he will often back up three or four feet in order to enable him to be on a parallel line with the one he is talking to. This, of course, is ridiculous, and the beginner should be made to understand that it is perfectly proper to talk up stage whenever the positions of the actors are so arranged that the down-stage actor must speak attentively to the up-stage actor. A good director, however, will plan the general stage movements so that on all possible occasions the one speaking shall have either a parallel or up-stage relationship to the other, but there are hundreds of situation where the opposite position is inevitable. Besides, to relieve the monotony and stiffness of positions, and in making the scene realistic, it is often advisable to speak deliberately up stage. Sometimes the expression of one's back in speaking is more important than the expression of the face and the director deliberately arranges the positions to give this opportunity. In speaking to one about to leave at a back exit, it is more often than not necessary to speak up stage.

There are a few situations where one must not speak up stage. For instance in speaking aside, or in a soliloquy and where facial expression is of primary importance, the position must be planned so as to bring the speaker with face toward the audience.

When speaking off stage, if the character is supposed to be at a distance or behind closed doors, the illusion is made perfect by muffling the mouth in the sleeve of the coat. If nearer at hand the effect is produced by speaking back in the throat and gradually increasing the volume, pushing forward the placement of the tone at the same time until the moment of entrance when the voice will have its full resonance.

(13.) Asides. One of the most important phases of dramatic dialogue is the speaking of "asides." There are several forms of the aside each of which requires slightly different treatment. First among these forms is the quickly interjected phrase or word meant to convey the thought which is not understood to be spoken aloud. For instance, a character steps upon the stage and begins conversation with another character. During this conversation, his thoughts are such that he doesn't want his companions to perceive. For the sake of the audience, however, he must express them some way, so the stage device of the *aside* is employed. Turning slightly away from his companion and in a different tone or pitch or degree of force from this conversation, he speaks his thought, not directly at the audience as if he were addressing them, but permitting them to hear or to know exactly what he is thinking without realizing that he has actually spoken. This aside is employed only when it is not possible to give the thought without the actual words. A great deal can be done by gesture, facial expression and attitude, but often the *exact* thought must be known by the audience in order to make clear certain features

of the situation. For example, in *A Happy Pair* when the husband is endeavoring to play upon the wife's emotional nature, he heaves a big sigh, "Ah-h," and then with a quick aside gives the impression that he is thinking "Nothing like a sigh to begin with." He must actually say this aloud, but the audience must understand that it is only the expression of what in reality is merely an unexpressed thought. If he delivers it as though it were actually aloud, the audience will wonder why the wife does not hear it and be indignant. The director must exercise great care in getting the right effect for asides, or many scenes will be ruined.

A second form of the aside is seen in the attempt of one character to speak to another without letting others on the stage hear. It is so different from the other form that special attention must be given to it. This form is frankly aloud, but with a subdued effect to give the impression of being only loud enough for one close by to hear and not loud enough for the others. The pantomime and vocal expression are different. Properly this should not be called an "aside" but rather a "stage whisper." The first form of the aside should not be given in a stage whisper for it is not a whisper. It is a complete thought supposed to be unexpressed, but actually told to the audience impersonally. Therefore it should not suggest a whisper, but rather, by accompanying action, should in the simplest way convey the thought and the mood of the moment. The "aside to another," however, *should* suggest a whisper, and the best method of doing this

is frankly lowering the voice in pitch and volume, and introducing a good deal of breath in the tone, at the same time using significant pantomime to show secrecy. Usually the eyes are turned slightly away from the one to whom the aside is given and the whole body harmonizes with the expression of secrecy.

Another form of the aside is the meditation apart from the others on the stage. This is usually a longer speech and is given in a reflective mood accompanied by a guarded bearing, if others are in the scene watching him, but if alone upon the stage, giving vent even more freely to his mood than while actually speaking aloud to others. For instance Shylock's long aside—"How like a fawning publican," etc.,—is a meditation while others are watching him. Shylock must act as if he were "contemplating his present store" as far as what Bassanio and Antonio can see, but the audience will detect by Shylock's facial expression, which is turned from the others, the mood with which he is giving the thought. Here the audience must understand that Shylock is not actually speaking aloud, but nevertheless they must know exactly what he is thinking. It would be impossible for him, by mere facial pantomime to give all that thought without words.

(14.) Soliloquies. The form of the aside just explained in the last paragraph is what is called *soliloquy* and will be discussed at length under a chapter devoted to the soliloquy in a play and the isolated soliloquy written expressly for a single actor in a single scene. This form of the aside refers to the expression of thought by an actor alone on the stage. He may

talk to himself frankly aloud, or he may give the impression of merely thinking or meditating, but since he is alone upon the stage, the audience will not be concerned whether it is meant to be aloud or not. In Hamlet's soliloquy the impression is given that Hamlet is talking aloud to himself. He is alone on the stage and the burden of his thought is such that he might reasonably talk aloud rather than meditate silently.

Literary Presentation of Plays.—Before leaving the chapter on the Play it would be well to speak of a new form of presenting plays—a form not so much entertaining as educational. In reality it is an encroachment on the reader's art, but it is excusable because of financial limitations existing in a complete production and where the beauty of the lines or the mood is made prominent for educational value rather than for complete artistic entertainment.

Shakespearian plays given by college organizations incur great expense and actual loss, if produced with all the scenic and costume equipment used in professional performances, so it has been found possible to dispense with special scenery and even the period costumes, presenting the play with all the action and properties but making more prominent the educational features.

The Cyclorama plan as set forth by Mr. B. H. Clark in his book, *How To Produce Amateur Plays,* is a most excellent plan for schools that must produce their plays inexpensively.

The Coburn Players and the Ben Greet Players, in their outdoor plan of entertainment have been ex-

tremely successful in producing many Shakespearian plays and other classics of great value educationally. There are many modern plays that can also be given effectively with merely screens set up for scenery and a few necessary pieces of furniture.

There is a form of presentation, which is mentioned here merely as a convenient means of entertainment for literary clubs and societies wishing to offer a play or scenes from plays without the formality of scenery or the added vexation of committing the lines. This plan consists of the several members of the cast "walking through the parts" with book in hand and attempting to carry as literally as possible some of the general action of the play. This method may be called "literary presentation."

These plans, however, are only makeshifts for lack of funds, and can not for a moment be accepted at the same valuation as a completely staged plan.

CHAPTER IV

THE ONE CHARACTER PLAY OR SOLILOQUY

Definition.—Up to this point the play of two or more characters has been discussed. The first step in progress from the realistic to the suggestive form of entertainment is the *Acting Soliloquy,* or One Character Play. In the Soliloquy the student becomes conscious of the fact that he alone is now the center of attention at all times. Hitherto he has acted with others who have alternately claimed attention and assisted him in interpreting the play, but now the whole responsibility, every instant of the play, is upon him. Here he finds there is no unobtrusive action and no time that he may relapse into a negligent pose while the attention is centered elsewhere. He must be doing something or saying something significant all the time. Under this type of play the actor still uses properties, make-up and scenery, but *it is the only form of entertainment suitable to one person where these accessories are permissible.* It is vital to remember this, for from time to time in succeeding steps there will be various temptations for the student to use properties.

In the Acting Soliloquy, we have a vehicle which requires not only characterization but detailed business with specific properties in order to make the thought of the selection and the author's purpose understood.

When this form of entertainment is used the entertainer must have the proper stage setting, costumes, properties and make-up appropriate to the character soliloquizing, and there must be *no imaginary* properties, costumes, nor other persons concerned in the presentation. The one character, if he speaks at all, is talking to himself and just as in the "aside" within a larger play, he is giving his thoughts to the audience without the audience realizing that he is actually speaking.

Comparison of the Soliloquy and the Aside within the Play.—All that has been said under the discussion of the aside to one's self, applies to the speaking of lines in the One Character Play. The only difference between the two is that the One Character Play is complete in plot and purpose, and is isolated from any other scene, while the aside within a play always bears some relation to the other scenes. The One Character Play is, of course, longer and tells a complete story. It is written for a reader and is usually arranged so that very simple scenery is required and very few properties are essential. These few properties and the necessity for scenery and furniture make the art *acting,* and the reader, for the time being, becomes an actor. If the properties and scene *can* be dispensed with, they *ought* to be, and the selection will be then classed under types suitable for the reader's art.

In most modern plays the aside and the soliloquy are avoided. A skilfully worked out play rarely has need for them, but the foregoing treatment of the sub-

ject still applies to the older plays and the classics which make great use of both the soliloquy and the aside.

The Acting Soliloquy is sometimes erroneously called the *Acting Monologue*. There is no such thing literally as an Acting Monologue. In a Monologue other characters are assumed to be present, but only the one character actually does the talking. He listens to their imaginary conversation, may shake hands with them in pantomime or he may hand them imaginary properties. Obviously one can not hand a real property to an imaginary character, and it is at this point that an *Acting* Monologue, in the sense we use the term "acting," would become absurd. The instant an audience is required to imagine the other characters, *it is inconsistent to use real properties.* Therefore the Soliloquy is the only form of the actor's art which the solitary entertainer may consistently render. The Monologue must not be *acted.* As a vehicle for personating, a form of the reader's art, it will be discussed later.

The Relative Importance of Scenery and Furniture.—The Soliloquy may have very ordinary scenery and it may be such that a simple platform with one or two pieces of furniture and some screens will do, but everything must be conveniently placed for use just as in a play of two or more characters. This form of entertainment is especially good for a closing number on a lyceum program. A splendid example is Leland T. Powers' *Pro and Con* in which a young man, meditating on the advisability of proposing to a

certain young woman, steps on an ordinary platform furnished with a chair and a small stand perhaps. Almost any platform dressed tastefully for a reader is sufficient to suggest the room in which this young man meditates, since here scenery is of almost no importance. Properties, however, are necessary to a complete rendition of this piece. The young man has a hat, an overcoat, gloves, and a letter in his pocket. The humor of the situation here demands real properties—imaginary ones will not do, for there is one piece of business which could not without confusion be pantomimed. If it were not for this the selection could be given as a Personation without any properties. Another similar selection is *A Morning's Mail,* by Edmund Vance Cook. The letters are actually necessary because of some particular business which would not be understood if pantomimed without the properties. In both selections, the characters in soliloquy are acting rather absent-mindedly and it is necessary that the audience discern what is supposed to be the action with the properties and the action that is *intended by the young men themselves* to be only imaginary. If all the action with properties were made imaginary by objective pantomime, the significance of the *intended* imaginary action would be lost.

Excerpts from Plays for the Platform.—Sometimes long asides or meditations are taken from a play and arranged in a soliloquy which may be acted by a lyceum entertainer. Ophelia's "Mad Scene" and Lady Macbeth's "Sleep Walking Scene" may be so arranged. All the other characters' speeches are taken

out and the one character speech *acted* with properties, in a screened off portion of the platform made to represent an ordinary room in the Macbeth scene, or a special outdoor scene arranged for the Ophelia episode. Any similar excerpt, however, should be made from well-known plays, for the audience otherwise would have no way of seeing the connection with the rest of the play. These scenes are *best* given as readings for there is rarely one of them in which properties are essential. Plays that are strong enough in thought and emotion rarely need the action with properties that could be introduced by *one* person during a soliloquy. It is sufficient for the one person to give the *mood* of the character. Many entertainers go to the extreme to try to arrange everything so that they may "dress the part" and exploit their ability in *"make-up."* There comes to mind one entertainer in particular who had an arrangement from *Eben Holden* in which he proceeded as follows: During a preliminary explanation, he hung a mirror in the back of one of the pulpit chairs (the entertainment was in a church) and put several little properties on the pulpit and the altar rail. Then he stepped behind the screen and, while explaining the situation, made up as Eben Holden. Presently he reappeared with lather all over his face and during the implied dialogue that followed, proceeded to shave. It was not a soliloquy. A young woman was supposed to be present. It wasn't even a real monologue, but the entertainer had so arranged the dialogue because evidently he saw far enough ahead to realize that he couldn't make the audience effectively imagine a

young woman speaking with lather all over her face. Therefore he *did* keep to the character of Eben Holden and allowed his audience to imagine the young woman sitting on one of the pulpit chairs. Considering, however, that the scene was supposed to be a kitchen and the chief character was literal in costume and make-up, it was rather too much of a stretch for the imagination to convert pulpit chairs, etc., into a kitchen sink. The whole arrangement was absurd and need not have occurred at all.

The one thing to remember about the *Acted* Soliloquy is that only one character can be present, and then only among consistent surroundings and necessary properties. No other character can even be assumed for the soliloquy means one "talking to himself."

Technique of Presentation.—The technique of presentation is practically the same as that of many a character play with regard to the set, the furniture grouping, properties, costuming and make-up. The outside effects, lighting, etc., are rarely necessary, but if so they should be very simple. Only those things which are vitally related to the character soliloquizing should be required. Since no other characters are concerned, the properties that are not handled or referred to by the character need not be in the set. The minute business of the character is very essential and of course of utmost importance to the play for in the Acted Soliloquy it is the need of such *business* that makes it so classified. If the thought and emotion only are essential then the selection is not for acting

and will be discussed under another topic. The action and the speaking of lines are treated exactly as a long aside in a play.

CHAPTER V

ILLUSTRATIVE MATTER

From the Play Requiring Two or More Characters.—For the purpose of illustration, the second scene of the first act in *The Merchant of Venice* will be sufficient.

The set is a rather elaborate interior arranged to represent the dressing-room of Portia. The furniture consists of a settee, a dressing table with mirror, and two or three chairs. The properties are all the necessary paraphernalia of a dressing table, brush, hand mirror, perfume, etc., all typical of the period.

At the rise of the curtain Portia, a young woman in a dressing gown and slippers, is discovered in a chair by the table at the lower left-hand corner of the stage. At her back the maid, Nerissa, stands, while dressing her mistress' hair. During the dialogue, at exact points, specific movements are to be made. Every director has a certain number of movements which he has planned out, and they may all be different, and at different points in the dialogue from those any other director has planned, but as long as they are consistent with his interpretation, they are legitimate and will help make the situation real. Just the business of a line or two here will suffice.

Portia: Heigho, my little lady is aweary of the great world. *(Sighs, droops shoulder and puts down hand mirror which she has been holding.)*

Nerissa: You would be, sweet madam, etc. *(Tarries in the act of brushing and picks up comb.)*

Portia: Good sentences and well pronounced. *(Shrugs shoulders, reaches down to knee and picks off a long hair and rather absent-mindedly winds it over finger.)*

Now, of course the above business would rarely be seen in a prompt book, but the director suggests it in order that these points may give a living reality to the scene. He may even say for instance, "When you replace the hand mirror, it should rest on the table at the word aweary!" Of course it could be accomplished just as well on some other word perhaps, but if the director says "aweary"—that is the word on which the action must come. If the girls are experienced actresses it will not be necessary to be as exact in telling them where to shrug shoulders or do the most detailed subjective action, but to inexperienced students even the small detail of showing surprise by lifting the eyebrows is often necessary to suggest. Just as children learn to walk and talk through imitation, so the actor takes his first steps through imitation.

In the presentation of the scene just described, all the dresser articles to be used must be there in reality. There can be no imaginary comb or brush. The servant who enters must be real. To look upon two girls

in a perfectly arranged setting while they talk together, and to be obliged to *imagine* a third entering upon the scene is an impossible situation. The audience would immediately think the girls were imagining the servant in a spirit of fun. The moment the reader steps into the realm of the actor, he must be consistent with the laws of acting or the result will be confusing. Portia, Nerissa and Balthasar are the three characters concerned in the scene. There can be no makeshift whereby any one of the three, or any of the properties concerned, can be omitted if the scene is to be acted. If it is to be read, then one person will suggest everything without the assistance of any properties.

Illustration from the One Character Play.—Lady Macbeth's "Sleep Walking Scene," when given within the play, is interrupted by conversation between the doctor and the maid. The setting represents a room in the Macbeth castle. A table and a chair or two are all the necessary furniture, but it may be as elaborate as one wishes. Lady Macbeth will be in negligee and slippers, with her hair in braids as if prepared for the night. She will enter with a lighted candle in her hand and stalk majestically to the table where she will place the candle. The other characters will be stationed in an alcove up stage whence they will make their interpolated remarks. Lady Macbeth's business will be mainly subjective. This scene might be given by one person as a single number on a program, in a setting simply arranged with table, chairs and candle. The dialogue of the doctor and the maid would be

omitted, and the whole scene given as a one act play in which only one character appears and talks in her sleep, but if it is so given, the entertainer's purpose is more to exploit the action and the costume, etc., than to give the moods of the selection. Here again the single entertainer will do better to read than to act, but since the excerpt may be arranged in the form of a soliloquy, it may be acted without violating the law of consistency.

Pro and Con, by Leland T. Powers, was written to be acted. It is a typical acting soliloquy requiring certain properties, but since it was expected to be given by a reader, the arrangement of furniture and scenery is very simple. A brief explanation of the synopsis will show why the selection should be acted rather than given through personating with only imaginary properties.

A young man enters with hat and gloves in one hand and his overcoat on his arm. He lays the hat and coat on a chair or convenient article of furniture and proceeds to put on his gloves while soliloquizing. He intends to propose to a certain Margaret, but just as he gets the glove half-way on he suddenly thinks of all the joys of bachelorhood which he must give up if he enters the state of matrimony. Slowly he begins to work the glove off until the remembrance of her charms turns the scale in her favor. Then he begins to rub on the glove rapidly, all the time speaking of Margaret's wonderful ways. Gradually he falters again as other problems crowd upon his thoughts and once more he begins to draw off the glove. He alter-

nates between the two decisions, showing his state of mind mainly by the unconscious working off and on of the glove until finally as he thinks of the mother-in-law-to-be, he pulls off the glove with a decisive jerk and starts to put it in his pocket, where he discovers a letter. The letter is from Margaret herself and in reading it he decides to call upon her after all. This decision alters, however, when upon turning a page of the letter, he learns that she is announcing her engagement to another man. Blank amazement overspreads his features as one by one the gloves drop from his hands. He slowly tears up the letter, staring straight in front of him without saying a word and then absent-mindedly begins to rub his fingers *as if* putting on the gloves. It is at this point in the selection that we see why the real properties are needed. To make this piece of business funny there must be a distinction understood on the part of the audience between the action of pulling on the real gloves and the absent-minded pantomime of the same act. If all the properties were imagined, the audience would not know the difference in the action when the young man becomes absent-minded, and they would lose the humor of that particular situation. Since one property is essential, the other properties are necessary. To use real gloves and an imaginary letter would be inconsistent and confusing to the audience. Hat and overcoat are needed to complete the consistency. Of course, by sacrificing that particular bit of humor, the selection could be given as well through personating as through acting, but since the selection is in soliloquy form and

since the properties and scenery are so very simple, the entertainer might as well conform to the author's evident purpose and give the selection as indicated by the stage directions, for he can do so with perfect consistency.

Another popular soliloquy which should be given through acting, if the author's purpose is to be carried out, is *A Morning's Mail,* by Edmund Vance Cooke. The scene is a simple interior containing a table littered with books and papers, and a chair or two. A young man enters with his hands full of letters which he begins to read. All this could be done through personating with imaginary letters, etc., but the fact that it is a soliloquy and that one piece of business would not be understood were it so given, makes it more completely presented through acting. In the middle of the young man's soliloquy concerning his letters he comes upon an invitation to a card party. He lays down his letters and begins *to make believe deal cards* as if already at the party, at the same time indulging in some sarcastic remarks to his imaginary hostess and guests, and imitating them with affectation. This imaginary action with the cards and his imaginary guests would not be understood by the audience unless contrasted by action with the real letters and surroundings. Here the audience must not imagine any other person in the scene but *must* understand that the young man *himself* is imagining his guests. When an audience is led to imagine properties, etc., at the start, it will accept the situation and imagine everything suggested, but when it sees real

properties at the beginning, naturally it supposes that everything to be seen will actually be there in its place. Consequently, if any property is omitted and merely indicated by literal objective pantomime, the inevitable conclusion is that the pantomime is a part of the character's imagination and the audience will accept no part of such pantomime as referring to real objects. The shuffling and dealing of cards in this selection is a part of the character's imagination, and since real letters and surroundings have been used, the relationship to the imaginary cards is easily understood.

Brief Summary.—Before closing the chapter, it will be well to crystallize one or two apt phrases that may stand as convenient guide-posts in assisting the young student to judge when a selection demands the art of acting and therefore requires the use of properties or whether it may better be given through the art of reading.

In a Play with other actors, he will ALWAYS use properties.

In a One Character Play, or Soliloquy, he will use them, if the action of the play would appear INCONSISTENT or INCOMPLETE without them.

In any Reading where other characters are to be imagined by the audience, the student will NEVER use properties, for to imagine characters at the same time that real properties are used is confusing and often results in utter loss of the real significance of the selection.

It is true that there are some selections which are impossible to give consistently, if the author's direc-

tions are to be strictly followed. In that case, the selection should either be avoided or else reconstructed consistently or, if it *must* be given, frankly presented as a burlesque so that the audience may not be confused or at least feel uncomplimented as to its intelligence. The example quoted above, *The Morning's Mail,* was originally inconsistent in construction, for it made properties essential and then introduced another character at the close of the scene. In order to make it consistent, the other character should be omitted, as long as properties are to be used, or else the selection should be presented by two actors. A third possibility of reconstruction would be to omit the portion dealing with the imagination of the young man in assuming guests at a card table, and giving the selection through personating where all properties are imagined. Then the character at the close of the selection could also be imagined. The first suggestion is the best, however, for the entrance of the second character is of practically no importance.

If the student keeps watch for inconsistencies in construction and takes the time to reconstruct them according to the standard of consistency, he will have very little trouble in working out all his programs to suit the taste of all classes of audience without offending any.

CHAPTER VI

REHEARSING BEGINNERS

General Remarks.—In the discussion under technique of presentation it has already been pointed out that it is unwise to keep impressing beginners with the fact that they are amateurs. It is better rather to assure them that the director will not be satisfied with amateur work; that amateurishness belongs only in the production given under unskilful coaching, and that skilful direction coupled with earnest and continuous hard work will present a professional performance, not, to be sure, equal to that of the world renowned companies, but actually far better than the average traveling, one-night-stand actors accomplish.

It is time that the public were brought to understand that traveling companies do not necessarily produce professional work, nor on the other hand, that plays produced by college students must be classed as amateur. Technically, of course, the student production is amateur, but the term is misleading and has done much to make home audiences think they must come to the college play prepared to be tolerant and critical. The same audience will pay five times as much to see a fifth-rate, "slap-stick farce" or a blood-curdling melodrama given by a traveling company and imagine they are watching a really artistic performance which they would not think of criticizing.

The director should see to it that his cast realizes they are not to be classed as amateurs, but rather as beginners. They must not acknowledge themselves amateurish but on the other hand must strive for professional excellence. Their work then will be professional, and the audience will learn to respect it.

Selecting the Cast.—In picking the cast the director should look for "fitness to the part," not putting his inexperienced students in the leads, but choosing according to seniority of experience and adaptability for the part, for if a student is given a characterization so unlike himself that he is conscious of his acting all the time, he will never get away from his dependence on coaching and is liable to retain a self-consciousness that will rob him ultimately of his individuality. He should be allowed first to act in parts that are most like himself in mood, voice, carriage, size and build. He is thus enabled to get accustomed to acting on the stage without being constantly corrected and "made over." Later when he has had more experience in acting out what is natural for him, he may safely be directed first in a slightly different mood and then gradually as his versatility becomes apparent he may be guided into widely different rôles. It is a mistake to allow beginners to think they can step right into star parts and create an impression on the audience that will immediately reach Belasco's ears and cause him instantly to wire, "Come at once. New York is waiting for you." About nine-tenths of the aspirants for the stage indulge in just these very dreams, and it should be one of the director's

first tasks to dispel the illusion. He should not discourage real talent when it exists, but he should make it thoroughly understood that talent is of no earthly use to an individual unless he works and is willing to follow implicitly the advice of his director. Talent plus long hours of labor makes *genius,* and if one would be considered a genius he must plan to work hard and long and patiently at things which seem trivial perhaps, before he can hope to get started at the big things. It is a good plan to formulate a "working up" process whereby the student begins with a "bit" and proceeds through utility, ingenue and character parts to the leading rôles. Some will never get further than "bits," but if their genius does not entitle them to promotion, they should never be promoted. It is much better that they be informed at this stage of their career that they were not meant for actors than to push them into parts through which they would soon suffer greater humiliation. In selecting the cast, size and build should of course fit the character as far as possible so that there will not be a ridiculous situation arising from matching a small man with a large woman or a character supposed to be a giant substituted by a man of less than five feet. The director will have to use good sound judgment in deciding whether size and build are factors in picking his particular cast.

After picking the cast the director should instruct the members to read the whole play aloud at home, before the first rehearsal is called. It is a mistake for any member to be ignorant of the whole purpose of

the play. If it is not possible for all members to have complete copies, the director should read it to them.

Reading Rehearsal—General Business Given.—At the first rehearsal the stage should be marked off a little larger than the actual stage on which the final performance is to be given. For practice, the cast should be allowed plenty of room so that in final production their movements in a smaller space will be more concentrated in effect. To allow practice on a small stage and then expect the student to expand his action in the final performance results in disappointment because it is much easier for the beginner to work in a small space than in a large one. In expanding a movement a beginner will become suddenly conscious of himself, and indecision coupled with a certain awkwardness of movement will be apparent. After the stage is marked off (using chairs to mark the entrances) and tables, chairs, stands, etc., are in their proper places, the students should walk through their parts with manuscript in hand, read the lines, and follow the general directions as to crosses and turns, making note of places where to sit and rise, and getting the correct interpretation of the lines. No emotional suggestion is given at this rehearsal, but the student should write down each important cross or turn on the margin opposite the lines on which the business occurs so that in home practice he may rehearse over and over again the line and the business together. Business learned separately from the line is never carried out with the appearance of spontaneity that such work calls for.

Act by Act Procedure.—The second reading rehearsal should be a repetition of the first except that the instructor should give no new business other than to correct or repeat whatever the student forgets from the last rehearsal. The play should be rehearsed act by act until the general business of each act is thoroughly memorized with the lines. After each rehearsal while the business is fresh in mind the student should go over his part alone at home until every movement is inseparably associated with the lines and is fixed in its proper sequence.

Memorizing Lines and Cues.—Each act should be memorized before taking up the succeeding one. The best method of memorizing is to take the part with the cues and typewrite them or write them out by hand. This method eliminates the handling of the whole play and the wasting of time in reading more than is necessary for each part. Long uninterrupted speeches may be memorized for attention to detailed business after the general business and the shorter speeches are established in mind. All the silent business and pantomime are learned best at regular rehearsal so that proper timing of the business with the lines of the others may be acquired, but the study of lines and general business should be done at home.

Detailed Business.—After the third rehearsal of each act no book should be permitted in the student's hand. All lines should have been memorized so that the student is free to attend to the detailed business which is not suggested by the director until the lines are at least roughly in mind. A prompter should be

present, but positively no manuscript should be allowed in the hands of the performer.

The director should be independent of the author's suggestion as to business. A play should be produced according to the director's interpretation of the thought and purpose of the play. The author may have suggested business, but it may not coincide with the director's interpretation and he should not feel bound to follow it out. After once being sure of the author's thought and purpose the director may employ whatever manner he sees fit. He is almost always better able to judge the values of stage business than the author.

No actor should presume to offer suggestions unless asked by the director. One interpretation must be consistent throughout and that must be the director's, not the individual actor's no matter how experienced he may be.

The director must be alive to all situations and be constantly originating business consistent at all points with the play. The slightest detail should not escape his notice for every one must be worked out for the student and practised until it becomes a registered part of the general action. The director will have to demonstrate to the beginner who will frankly imitate, for imitation is the first step in any process of learning. Every move must be copied and rehearsed over and over again. The director should insist that the student watch him closely while he is illustrating the business.

After a student has been in several plays a certain

liberty may be allowed him in the personal business he shall attach to the reading of lines that do not concern another's action. He may be allowed to work out his own business provided it is in accordance with the director's interpretation. When working with others, however, the action is "team-work," and the director becomes the coach, who makes every act consistent. In dramatic art a monarchy is better than a democracy since the director is solely responsible for the success or failure of a performance.

The director will find that stage business works out best with beginners if he suggests the business progressively from the general to more and more specific detail until he finally rounds it out with minute directions in personal expression, such as the look of surprise, anger, joy, etc.

Many people are of the opinion that it is necessary for the actor in order to be really artistic that he actually feel every emotion he portrays every time he acts. Nothing could be further from the truth, for the expression of the emotions becomes registered and reflexive just as a simple automatic motion is registered. We learn to dress in the morning without being conscious of our movements. We can learn to express joy, anger, contempt or any of the emotions without being conscious of the emotion at all. At first in rehearsing, the student must be led to feel genuinely and then to practise the resulting action until it is registered and becomes automatic with the repetition of the lines.

Property Rehearsal.—As soon as possible after

the book is dropped, the rehearsal should employ the properties or at least substitutes for the properties. The student should become accustomed to handling the articles while speaking the lines. If the property rehearsal is delayed until the last thing often such confusion results that one would think there had been no rehearsing at all. Mere pantomime with imaginary properties, especially by the inexperienced beginner, does not make a satisfactory or permanent impression. The pantomime is never done twice alike but the actual manipulating of the objects themselves soon becomes automatic. Of course, it is impossible to have all the properties in rehearsals at the very first, but such things as newspapers, letters, pencils, pen and ink, bells, dishes, glasses, bottles, books, etc., *can* always be kept on hand for the practice rehearsals. Properties that can not be had until the night of dress rehearsal may be substituted by articles that feel like them, such as a cigar box for a jewel casket; a short stick for a stove poker, or a broom handle for a spear.

The director must see that the young beginner in picking up books or magazines for silent perusal keeps his eye actually on the page and continually glances back and forth along the page as in real reading. Many beginners merely stare at the page or over it—anywhere but the place they should look. If the character is supposed to be reading, his actions should indicate it.

It is not a good plan to allow students to use real cigars, cigarettes or tobacco in ordinary practice. A short pencil will do. It will give practically the same

"feel" while practising and is not half so annoying to the ladies of the cast. When it is time for the final rehearsal the use of the tobacco may then be permitted.

While rehearsing a dinner scene in which many dishes and utensils are used, the director can not take too much pains in timing the handling of articles with the progress of the lines. It must be done noiselessly and at the same time swiftly and accurately. These scenes should be rehearsed again and again until every move is reflexive and automatic.

Great attention must be paid to all music cues, which should be known by the orchestra or the music director behind the scenes. He must know at what point to start the music, when to let it die down gradually, when it is to swell and when to stop. There should be a special music rehearsal in which these parts are practised over and over until everything is synchronous.

When an actor who does not play the piano is given a part requiring that he play on the stage, it is unfortunate but sometimes unavoidable. In such a case, there must be days of special training with a competent musician who will play back of the scenes while the actor goes through the motions before the audience. By constant practice this arrangement may be brought about so skilfully that the audience is often unaware that the actor is not the musician.

Polish.—After the general rehearsals have been in progress some time, there will appear certain scenes that are particularly effective and certain ones that are weak. There should be special rehearsals

called for the weak scenes, and these should be worked over separately until they are as effective as the others. Nearly always there will be one or two of the actors who are not developing their parts as rapidly as the others. The director should find time to do a little private coaching in these cases. Nothing should be left undone that will make the whole cast work in unison and with a good distribution of important business.

The "star" system should never be suggested among beginners. It is unfortunate that it exists among professional companies, but commercialism has made it inevitable. The cast for school production should not be allowed to get the impression that the part usually played by a star is necessarily the leading part. Opportunity to do good work should not all be given to the leads, but should be distributed among the characters as every good play directs. In a good play, the leading part does not monopolize all the good business. It may have a major portion center around the hero or heroine, but it would be unbalanced and unreal to make him the center of attention at *all* times. Wherever this is done it is usually the fault of a conceited, pampered star who imagines the public cares nothing about any part of the play except his, so he makes every bit of business pertain to him and "cuts" all that might lead the attention to others of the cast. A good director will see to it that every character of the play has many opportunities to make his part a recognized factor in the play as a whole.

In these last few rehearsals for "polish" the director

should watch carefully the minutest detail in line interpretation and business, and wherever possible he should correct the imperfections. He should add a touch here and there for new personal color if it will make the scene more intimate and life-like. Business that has not developed well or proved effective may be eliminated and other business substituted. Even a change in an entrance or a cross or turn may be made at the last moment, if the strengthening of the scene demands, but as a rule the fewer changes the better. There should be no changes back and forth. If the director, for instance, is undecided as to whether the actor should go to the back of a certain chair or sit at the foot of the lounge, let him give one direction and continue rehearsals for that until he is sure it should be changed. Then toward the last it can be changed without difficulty, but if on one day he thinks the back of the chair best, then on the next day changes to the foot of the lounge, and finally after seesawing for several rehearsals, changes back to the original position, the beginner in acting will be so confused there is no telling what he may do at the final production. The director must decide upon one way and keep that until he is sure it will not do, then he may change to the other, but a third change to the same piece of business is confusing.

Many things could be said regarding the proper way to shake hands in greeting or in farewell, the attitude of consoling one in grief, or one's bearing in making love, but these things are best left to the tactful and cultured director whose good taste will enable

him to see what is and what is not fitting in such cases. It may not be out of place, however, to say that a love scene must be acted *just right* or the whole play will be tolerantly called "amateur." Young people are so self-conscious when it comes to acting a love scene that it is hard to get results that will not look stilted or else over-done and sentimental. In the first place the director must make clear that an audience will not make fun of the actor who does not reveal *himself* in the scene. The moment an actor becomes conscious of himself and acts embarrassed the spell is broken. Love scenes should not be ridiculously sentimental, but on the other hand there must be no hesitancy to embrace or to give the stage kiss, if that is what the part calls for. The audience will ridicule the half-way attempts at love making when obviously the part calls for a full representation. The stage director should make clear that the audience is not to think of the player but of the *character he represents.* If the actors show hesitation and embarrassment then the attention of the audience reverts to the players themselves and the characters represented are lost for the moment.

The success of love scenes depends almost wholly upon the director. If he is a man of taste and discretion, he will see to it that his players are not needlessly embarrassed in first rehearsal. Later, when the spirit of the scene is felt thoroughly, the action should be introduced and all embarrassment dispelled immediately by calling the attention of the players to the fact that they are not amateurs; that they are representing

two serious people in a scene calling for the utmost delicacy of treatment; that any attempt at levity or nonsense in the beginning is a serious hindrance to the ultimate success of the scene, and that its effect on the audience will depend upon the ease and lack of self-consciousness with which the little intimate touches—the clasp of hand, the embrace or the kiss—are carried out. Many directors are so unwilling to tell the players to kiss that they will change the stage business, or what is worse, introduce a salute so absurdly unlike the real caress that the audience notices the inconsistency and laughs at "the amateurish trick." Such scenes are no place for false ideas of propriety and convention. While there is rarely need for an actual kiss, there is frequently necessity for the "stage kiss" which looks exactly like a real one, and can be given without in the least offending good taste or true ideals of propriety. The director should not be led astray by the prudish notion that young people should never be allowed to embrace on the stage. Of course, beginners should not be launched into plays which include elaborate love scenes. Much less should they be allowed to play in the problem plays of the day, but plays offering simple situations calling for ordinary salutations and caresses may be handled with ease and with perfect regard for convention. It is absurd, for instance, when a scene representing a father returning to his daughter after a long absence, is portrayed by the two people standing three feet apart and gravely shaking hands. It is hardly less ridiculous to see the father make the initial

movement toward offering the kiss and then rest his chin on her shoulder and put his nose in her back hair while her face wholly visible to the audience remains as surely unkissed as that of the old maid in *King Dodo*. If the embrace and salute are made simply and without hesitation, the audience will like the scene and never think of laughing at the players. It should be remembered that an embrace *at arm's length* is impossible. There are, of course, many situations requiring merely the laying of the hands on the shoulders, but where a real embrace would naturally be effected in real life, such as the caress between father and daughter, husband and wife, or mother and son, a real embrace is necessary on the stage. If the characters represented are supposed to be lovers or a couple just becoming engaged, the manner of the embrace or the caress should be much more formal (unless, of course, the scene is broad comedy), but it should not be stiff or unnatural.

Many people criticize the realistic presentation of love scenes on the ground that it is not safe for young people; that it leads to unconventional habits, and that the participants of such scenes are liable to think they are actually in love. To this let it be said that if the director is a man of right principles and sound pedagogy, he will know his players and will not cast the sentimental, susceptible young people in these scenes. Young people of good sense will be taught poise, self-control and dignity through the training offered in love scenes, and later in real life they will use better judgment for having had this systematic training on the stage.

The Dress Rehearsal with Effects.—The purpose of the dress rehearsal is to accustom the player to his dress; to acquaint him with the dimensions of the final set and readjust himself to distances, location of the furniture and the exits; to gauge the time for quick changes of costume, and to handle the properties that have not been available before dress rehearsal, such as swords, shields, guns, etc., which require special attention. All the business of disposing of hats, overcoats and wraps must be watched carefully for often a slight mistake in removing a coat or placing a hat on the hatrack will ruin the effect of a scene.

Since the first rehearsals have been conducted on a larger scale of distances than the final set of the scene, all the action now at the dress rehearsal becomes more concentrated and hence more effective. It is much easier to express power in the rendition of a line while walking three feet than to speak the same line while walking six or eight feet. For instance, in previous rehearsals let us suppose the distance from the fireplace, left, to the sofa, right, has been eighteen feet. The young man standing by the fireplace has been told to walk suddenly over to the girl on the sofa and speak more intently. He has been practising the speech and the sudden stride over approximately fifteen feet. Now in the dress rehearsal, the distance is but a little over nine feet. What is the result? The sudden movement becomes more abrupt, the speech more concentrated in time and intensity.

The dress rehearsal gives the first opportunity for the actors to work with the stage mechanic and with

the timing of their lines with the actual working of the effects including the light changes and the accompanying sounds back of the scenes.

At the dress rehearsal the prompter should be on hand in the Right Tormentor entrance, and he should be instructed to *keep his eyes on the lines at all times.* His responsibility should not be divided with the director's or the stage manager's. His work is to be ready to prompt the line that might fail to be remembered. The director should see to the calls, the entrances, the rings and knocks, the light cues and the business of the effects while the stage manager should have the responsibility of the furniture, the scenery and the properties that are to be in place at the opening of the act.

The dress rehearsal should not be the final rehearsal. There should be at least a rehearsal of certain scenes that went badly at the dress rehearsal. Certain corrections will appear necessary, for the students are unaccustomed to the real stage and its dimensions, and they should have opportunity to work out the little problems that appeared for the first time in the dress rehearsal. Many directors are superstitiously willing to leave the final performances to chance, and quote the ridiculous old saying that "a rotten dress rehearsal insures a good performance." It is much safer to go over some of the scenes that were "rotten" in dress rehearsal and give the students a chance to improve them.

Final Rehearsal.—The *final rehearsal* should be held the day after the dress rehearsal and should be

devoted solely to the correcting of errors made at the dress rehearsal. Old business or directions should not be considered. Words of encouragement when they are deserved should be given, and the director should not feel that it is necessary to curse and swear at the actors who make mistakes at a dress rehearsal. Some directors who do so, make the excuse that it puts the actors on their mettle. As a matter of fact pessimism or loss of temper on the part of the director can do more harm than the lack of a final rehearsal may inflict. It should be remembered that it is not necessary for the director to make the cast hate him in order to get professional results. Such a conception is the outgrowth of ignorance and stupidity. If courteous criticisms do not make the student honestly set to work to overcome his faults, it is better that he be dismissed at once from the cast. It is the duty of every director to use the utmost patience in helping the discouraged member to revive interest and apply himself to more difficult work.

A Final Word.—Before closing the discussion on Acting a final word must be said regarding the literal reproduction of the text which contains profanity and coarse expressions. It sometimes happens that a character is supposed to be unrefined or even downright evil and that his language abounds in epithets and unpleasant phrases. The beginner, if he has been brought up in an atmosphere of refinement, naturally hesitates to use some of the coarser expressions and asks the director what to do about them. At this point the director must use the greatest care and judg-

ment. Where an experienced actor might carry off the scene without reflection upon his own good taste, the beginner is apt to ruin the scene and at the same time his own reputation by his lack of power to create the character apart from himself. Much difficulty may be overcome if the director is a good judge of people, for he will not cast a timid, self-conscious actor in such a part. Plays that abound in profanity should never be selected for beginners. There are plenty of good plays which deal in refined characters and situations so that the director need not feel compelled to choose the type that caters to unrefined tastes. When, however, it seems necessary to represent a character that is somewhat rough in contrast to the others, the director can almost always reduce the unpleasant expressions to the minimum and still keep the suggestion of the character. One should not be too prudish about the occasional use of "damn" and "hell." These words are not actually profane, and although they sometimes have an unpleasant effect on refined ears, they are no worse than "darn" or "hades" which are sometimes substituted in a weak and ridiculously effeminate manner. Either the words should be omitted altogether or else used as they appear in the text. The use of terms referring to the Deity must certainly be viewed in a different light. There is very rarely need of actual blasphemy on the stage, and it may be stated as a well established principle that plays requiring such irreverence should not be accepted for beginners. It is not necessary to remark that vulgar or obscene language is never excusable on the stage.

There are, however, false notions as to what are improper expressions and it is on record that one prudish and falsely modest director of dramatics objected to the words "leg" and "nightgown" and asked her students to substitute the words "limb" and "robe-de-nuit" in order that the performance might be refined. Common sense and natural purity of soul will discriminate between objectionable words and words that are only made wrong by false standards of propriety and culture.

One of the beautiful features of stage directing is the creating of pictures in the scenes—the grouping of characters so that there is constant balance and at the same time variety in the pose of different groups. To make the groups seem natural and to keep up the action of the scene at the same time while the pictures are ever changing and taking different forms, is the aim of every truly artistic director.

Finally, let it be remembered that the difference between real amateur productions and the professional student production should exist in the method of training and *not* in the result at the public performance of the play.

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Definition of Reading.—The art of *Reading* refers to all that class of presentation on the platform by one person without the aid of special scenery, properties, stage furniture, special costumes, make-up or mechanical effects of any kind, and is always distinguished from One Character *Acting* by the *absence* of these accessories.

The Relationship of Reading to Acting.—*(1.) The Arts Themselves.* While *Acting* has been already discussed as the art of choosing essential details in the production of a *realistic impression, Reading* will be considered as the art of choosing from essential details the kind and number necessary to produce an *imaginative* and *general* impression capable of being interpreted according to the individual experiences of the auditors. The number and kind of details chosen are determined largely by the type of reading to be presented.

In all the discussion which follows relative to the art of the Reader, it is to be understood that but *one person* is concerned in the rendition of any piece of literature. In leaving the subject of Acting, we have left all forms of ensemble or company performance, and are concerned solely with the work of a single individual, man or woman, on the platform.

In speaking of "the platform" we refer to the bare space occupied by the Reader, in contradistinction to the "stage" which always presupposes a larger space appropriately furnished with tables, chairs, settees, and three walls with doors and windows or back drop curtains and wings representing an exterior scene. The platform may be entirely bare or may have for convenience a plain chair or two and a small stand. These articles of furniture, however, never become an integral part of a scene, and are merely used to give a pleasant, comfortable background for the speaker.

(2.) The Artists Compared. There are still many readers and teachers of elocution who make no distinction between the Reader and the Actor or their respective arts, and who are constantly confusing them in the attempt to entertain their audiences. It should be understood that from the very nature of things, the Reader is limited in what he may do in presenting literature which normally requires several persons and a force of stage mechanics to produce. A brief resumé of the province of the Actor and the Reader at this point will assist in keeping in mind the relative requirements of their art.

The Actor is always *one character,* and remains that one character in make-up and appropriate costume throughout the play; he uses all properties described and indicated to be included in the play, and more often than not, he is assisted by other persons in the performance. The Reader, on the other hand, may represent one or many characters during the rendition of any type of literature, always, however, holding

himself in readiness to change instantly from one character to another, or in almost the same breath to assume direct address or narration in giving explanatory matter to his audience; he never uses properties, make-up, costumes, etc., and he is *never* assisted by others in the presentation of literature.

While it is occasionally true that an actor sometimes encroaches on the reader's art, yet it is not objectionable nor confusing to the audience. For instance, the actor tries sometimes to be intensely imaginative and to do a great deal of suggesting (on his part). This is, of course, perfectly legitimate in his individual work of facial expression and gesture, if it is not obviously inconsistent with the arrangement of the play. When, however, the other actors and surroundings are realistic and the atmosphere is realistic, it is not likely the audience will suspect the subtler suggestions, and of course will miss them if they are given. Sheridan's *The Critic* is an admirable example of the absurdity in overdoing the *suggestiveness* in the play. Puff, Sneer and Dangle are witnessing Puff's latest play, and as one of the characters enters, shakes his head, and exits without a word, Sneer says to Puff,

Sneer: What did he mean by shaking his head so?

Puff: Why, by the shake of his head he gave you to understand that even though they had more justice in their cause and wisdom in their measure—yet, if there was not a greater spirit shown on the part of the people, the country

would at last fall a sacrifice to the hostile ambition of the Spanish monarchy.

Sneer: The devil! Did he mean all that by the shake of his head?

Puff: Every word of it—if he shook it as I taught him.

On the other hand the actor would be overdoing the realism if he were to indicate by a line that he would sit in a certain spot for two hours, and then straightway do so while the audience waited.

The reader, in turn, encroaches on the actor's art when he brings in properties, make-up or special costumes in a selection requiring several characters to be represented. A striking example of such an encroachment occurs in the case of a rather prominent reader of Wilson Barrett's *The Sign of the Cross.* The young woman appears in the costume of Mercia, with long flowing hair and a band of ribbon around her head. She carries a crucifix appending from a string of beads hung about her neck. Naturally while she is speaking the lines of Mercia, no great inconsistency appears, but when the audience is expected to see the villain Tigilenus stalk about in that same flowing gown and loose hair, and the next moment readjust its imagination in order to conceive the manly but pagan Marcus decorated by the beads and crucifix, it is liable to be more or less confused in the picture. Such a performance is inconsistent from two points of view: First, it is no compliment to an intelligent audience to assume that it is unable to understand the

character of Mercia unless she appears in full regalia, and second, it is rather unfair to force their imagination to do double duty and be obliged to undress one character before conceiving the others. Aside from that, the reader who does her work in this way so confuses realism with imagination that more often than not the audience goes home with a very hazy memory of beautiful tones, a lovely woman of the Middle Ages, a crucifix, and a rather disconnected idea of the story. If the audience is an intelligent one it will understand the story but will feel uncomplimented. If it is a popular audience, it will be affected by the emotion and the sentiment as well as the spectacular display of costume and graceful action, but the literature with its beauty and subtle meaning will be lost upon them. The reader may appeal to the imagination of the popular audience as well as to the cultivated audience, if he is consistent in his appeal. It is certainly not consistent at one moment to require no imagination on the part of the audience while holding up the real crucifix, and the next moment expect the audience to see Tigilenus with his sword held aloft when there is no sword to be seen! It is far easier to lead the audience to imagine both crucifix and sword. Since both can not be used literally and since a thousand other articles mentioned in connection with the rendition can not be actually shown, it is far more artistic to make suggestion inclusive of everything—costume as well:—and allow the audience to imagine the scene *apart* from the reader herself.

The reader should not attempt to be an actor while

reading. The danger of inconsistency and even absurdity in presentation is too great. It is true that perhaps the majority of people in an audience do not realize the inconsistency, and it is just as true that many who look at a bad painting do not see that it may be out of perspective or inconsistent in its lights and shadows or inharmonious in color. Yet the fact remains that it is *bad art*. That the audience is not conscious of its loss, is no reason for the reader to keep up the deception. While the reader is calling attention to such accidentals as costume and property, and constantly exhibiting movements which attract the thought to the *mode* and not the *matter*, the audience is losing all the finer and more subtle distinctions in thought and emotion.

One or two other examples may be given to show how the audience is cheated in such exhibitions.

Several years ago at a well-known college in the East, a reading of *Romeo and Juliet* was advertised to be given by the wife of one of the instructors. The young woman was a graduate of a popular school of oratory, and her appearance was anticipated with a great deal of pleasure. Imagine the surprise of the audience when they saw upon the rise of the curtain a rather curious framework of wood covered with white muslin and representing (after a moment's thought) Juliet's balcony in the middle of a perfectly bare floor. The ingenious piece of stage carpentry stood about six feet high. There was a ripple of laughter over the audience and then followed a hush for the young woman in the complete costume and

make-up of Juliet had appeared. To describe her antics would require more space than can be allotted to this illustration, but she skipped from one side of the stage to the other in her attempt to act out each character in his crosses and little inconsequential actions, until she came to the balcony scene. Here she performed her greatest feat in Japanese equilibration. She dodged into the little umbrella-shaped balcony and spoke Juliet's impassioned lines. Then she swung out and around and down on her knees for Romeo—and back again for Juliet's sigh! When it was time for the old nurse to call her, she put her hand to her mouth (gracefully, of course) and shouted "Juliet!" in the cracked voice of an octogenarian. Then, as Juliet again, in blissful repose on the rail of the improvised balcony, she sweetly answered, "Anon!" Later the scene with Peter and the nurse called forth the young woman's powers of literal characterization which she evidenced by waddling clear across the stage (still in Juliet's costume of course) in a representation of the stupid Peter, seating herself on an upturned pail and holding conversation (using more back-hand action) with the old nurse supposedly behind the scene.

At the close of the exhibition there were a few who felt it was necessary to congratulate the performer, but be it said to the credit of that college audience, the majority present were disappointed. A year or two before, one of America's greatest readers had given the same reading, standing (as she ought) in the middle of the platform, and scarcely moving two

steps to right or left during the entire rendition, yet she had entranced her audience. The contrast was so great and the memory of the true reading so vivid that the audience as a whole felt they had been cheated in the later performance. The young woman herself was not so much to blame. She had been taught that such exhibition was art and that such a rendition showed cleverness and versatility. She had not been allowed to use her own judgment and therefore could not see that a reader can not encroach upon the actor's art without serious loss to the audience.

The reader, on the other hand, may overdo his suggestion sometimes, just as the actor in sitting still two hours while the audience waits, would be overdoing the realism. There comes to mind a certain teacher of expression who once offered the amazing suggestion that in giving Dickens' *Christmas Carol* the words of the Ghosts should never be spoken. The professor said expressive pantomime should be manifested by Scrooge as if he were seeing a ghost and every now and then Scrooge should shudder and say, for instance, "You said your name was Marley?" or "You said you could sit down?" In other words the professor would rearrange the whole scene in monologue form because, since there is no such thing as a ghost, *it should be merely suggested!* In the course of conversation with the professor, one of his interested listeners hinted that since he had gone so far in the matter of suggestion, why not merely lie down on the stage and let the audience imagine *all* of Scrooge's dream! This seemed to be about the last word in leading an audience to an imaginative understanding.

The reader often makes the same mistake in judging the actor that the actor makes in judging the reader. He says, "The actor's work is simple, very simple—why anybody can do this—make this or that face—get down on all fours, etc., but it requires *art* to be a *reader!*" The actor in turn depreciates the reader "because," he says, "the reader is too elocutionary," whatever that is. "Anybody," he continues, "can get up and recite with a big voice and graceful gestures *Curfew Must Not Ring To-night,* but it requires *art* to take the point of view of a character totally unlike yourself and maintain it consistently throughout a play." Both are right and both are wrong. Each is right in saying that it takes art to do the work he champions. Each is wrong in depreciating the other's art and calling it simple and easy for anybody. They are two different arts and require different development, but they are both art.

In Part Three of this book, methods of study in the two arts will be suggested, and it will be shown that the reader's art grows out of the actor's art.

The Three Types of Presentation for the Reader. —*(1.) Personating.* Personating will be shown in a later chapter as the nearest approach to *acting* a reader may make without encroaching upon the art of the actor. It is not to be confused with the original meaning of the term which applied to the actor in his assumption of a character, but is to be understood in all the discussion of the text to refer to the art of the reader and *not* to that of the actor.

(2.) Impersonative Reading. Impersonative Reading is the intermediate step between Personating and

Pure Reading. Here the method of presentation is very much less realistic and correspondingly more suggestive than personating. It is the kind of presentation best adapted to all sorts of comedy and character readings and will be discussed in a chapter exclusively devoted to this type of treatment.

(3.) Pure Reading. Pure Reading is the highest type of suggestive presentation and will be discussed in connection with the rendition of the classics and all higher forms of literature appreciated for their beauty of thought and composition.

The Determining Factors in Making the Subdivisions.—*(1.) The Author's Purpose.* It has been shown that most literature in play form was intended for *acting,* for the very nature of the stage directions and the constant mention of properties to be used, demonstrate that the author's purpose was to have actors present a realistic performance with complete scenery and stage equipment. Therefore, in the case of a play, if we follow the author's purpose we shall be obliged to produce it with a company of actors in appropriate surroundings. A reader, however, if he chooses to present a play must frankly depart from the author's purpose since it is obviously impossible for one person to do all that the author requires. By changing the form of the composition from pure dialogue to descriptive dialogue in the present tense, a reader may present it thus transformed into a Character Play or a Reading Play, choosing to make prominent the mood or the characterization of the piece rather than the scene or the complete action. Ordinar-

ily it is to be understood, then, that the author's original purpose is disregarded when a play is to be presented by a reader. In all other forms of literature, however, the author's purpose should be the first consideration of the reader in order to determine which type of the reader's art is best suited to the selection under all normal conditions.

There are three key words, or phrases, which may be used to indicate the author's purpose found in the different forms of literary composition available for the reader's art. They are: *Literal Action, Eccentric or Comedy Characterization* and *Mood.* If a certain piece of composition shows unmistakably that the author intended *literal action* to be the most important factor in its delivery, the reader knows that *personating* is the type of presentation he should use; if, however, the selection does not indicate that literal action is necessary but that *eccentric or comedy characterization* was the purpose, the reader will use *impersonative reading,* but if neither literal action nor eccentric characterization is important, there remains only the expression of *mood* as the essential feature of the piece, and the reader should present it through *pure reading.*

(2.) The Literary Composition. There are seven distinct forms of literary composition which, singly or in combination, help the student to recognize the several types of selection suitable for the reader.

Exposition and Argumentation are not adapted to the presentation by a reader so in these pages no further mention of them will be made.

Narration and Description are already familiar to the student of English, and these two general forms embrace the specific forms known more intimately by the public reader as *soliloquy, implied dialogue, direct address, descriptive dialogue, pure narration, pure description* and *lyric composition.**

The first three forms are written in the first person and always represent but *one* speaking character. If the composition represents meditation, or soliloquy, the selection is called a *Soliloquy* (Personated Soliloquy, Character Soliloquy or Reading Soliloquy according to the author's purpose); if it is implied dialogue, or composition giving but one side of a supposed conversation, the selection is called a *Monologue* (Personated Monologue, Character Monologue or Reading Monologue according to the author's purpose); if direct address in which a comedy or eccentric speaker is represented as talking directly to a supposed audience, it is an *Eccentric Address* (a normal character speaking would classify the piece under *Declamation* which really belongs in the field of oratory rather than in reading); if the composition comprises a series of eccentric addresses or single uninterrupted speeches, connected by explanatory matter into one theme, the selection is a *Character Series.*

The aforementioned three forms of literary composition are the *only* forms that may be given consistently through *personating,* and then only when the author's purpose denotes literal action as the predom-

*See Appendix for specific definition.

inating requirement. The other four forms are the forms best adapted to *impersonative reading* or *pure reading* and may be found in either the *first* or *third* person. If the composition is descriptive dialogue (narration containing conversations interwoven with descriptive phrases or paragraphs of pure narration) the selection is either a *Character Narrative* or a *Narrative Reading* according to the author's purpose; if the composition is pure narration or pure description, it is respectively *Narrative Reading* or *Descriptive Reading*. If the composition is in any of the foregoing forms, but is idealistic and universal in its appeal, representing a universal mood rather than the mood of any particular individual, it is lyric and is called a *Lyric Reading*.

Besides the seven forms of composition suitable to the reader, we have already mentioned the *pure dialogue* form existent only in plays for acting. This form, however, may be changed to descriptive dialogue for the reader and the selection is then called a *Character Play* or a *Reading Play* according to the author's purpose.

(3.) Method of Classifying a Selection Quickly. When the reader examines a selection with a view to presentation, he may proceed logically in the following manner: Let us suppose that the selection is a scene from *Julius Cæsar*. Since the form is pure dialogue, we see at once the author's original purpose was to present it through acting, with scenes and all accessories. The reader, recognizing his limitations, will disregard the author's purpose and see for himself what

the next important factors are. Since more than one character is represented in speech, the reader will see that he can not consistently give the selection through personating, so he next asks himself whether the chief characters are sufficiently eccentric to warrant impersonative reading. Obviously Cæsar, Brutus, Antony, Cassius, etc., are normal characters, so the reader decides that after changing the pure dialogue to present tense, descriptive dialogue, he will present the play through *pure reading.*

Let us take another example—an arrangement from *Hamlet* giving merely the meditation speech of Hamlet. The form of composition is soliloquy. Since the arrangement is originally from a pure dialogue to be acted, the reader might be tempted to become the actor for the time and present the selection in a complete setting. There would be nothing inconsistent in this at all. However, in studying the selection further, the reader realizes that in this particular excerpt from the play, nothing but Hamlet's great mood is actually necessary, so he decides to present it through pure reading.

One more example may be helpful. The selection is Mark Twain's *Our Guides.* The form of composition is descriptive dialogue in narration and is written in the first person. Since it is in first person, the reader's first thought is that it may be implied dialogue or direct address. Reading further, however, he sees that the narrator is not important in a present tense situation or as an eccentric character telling a tale, neither is literal action called for, so the reader

decides that personating will not be necessary. In the narration there appear two eccentric characters in conversation and since the narrator himself is so unimportant that the tale could as well be told in the *third* person, the selection is immediately classed as a Character Narrative and should be given through *impersonative reading.**

General Limitations in Attitude and in Sex.—*(1.) Bearing in Reading (Pure or Impersonative) Compared to Bearing in Personating.* The reader while personating is not so severely limited in his bearing as he is in reading. He may walk about the platform assuming literally the gait of the character represented; he may sit, rise, kneel, fall, jump, skip or dance; he may do all the literal and realistic action that an actor would accomplish except to turn his back completely on his audience or to lie down upon the platform. These latter movements are never required of personating, for personating is a shade more imaginative than acting and requires the constant command of the speaker over the audience, an accomplishment which would be jeopardized were he to turn his back completely or were he to come so far off his dignity as to lie down on the floor—or even on a settee if such a piece of furniture were permitted. The actor is not so limited because the scenery surroundings and the

*See Diagram A in the Introduction, and beginning at the left, read toward the right, applying the test to each division, eliminating in order the key-notes, literal action, and eccentric or comedy characterization, until mood is reached, or stopping at the division whose key-note can not be eliminated.

other characters present may command the attention of the audience. The dignity of the actor himself is never considered apart from the character he represents, while the reader, even in personating is never wholly separated from his own personality and dignity as a reader.

The reader while reading, either impersonatively or purely, is limited in *bearing* to a standing position facing the audience. All action in regard to *carriage* and *poise* is mere suggestion except the actual standing. He never walks but may suggest the initial movement by a mere step or motion of the foot in an oblique forward direction. To suggest a seated position, he merely places the weight on the back foot and appears relaxed. The suggestion of opposition in speech—or two people facing each other in a conversation—is indicated by the slight turn of the body to the right or left of center (never a wide angle) as each character alternately speaks. When the reader gives explanatory matter to the audience his position is squarely facing them as in direct address, while his eyes pass from individual to individual as he talks. When a character is supposed to speak, his eyes do not see the audience but focus slightly to one side of the center as if looking at the other character.

Much could be said about the angles maintained by a reader in suggesting the position of several characters in a narrative or play, but such matters can best be left to the discretion and good taste of a competent teacher. It may be sufficient to say that the reader should never turn squarely to the left and then

squarely to the right (presenting a profile view to the audience) while indicating two characters in conversation. It is enough to suggest their opposition by a *slight* turn of the head and trunk. Often, if merely the head and *not* the trunk turns, the reader unconsciously gives to the character a suggestion of deceit or indifference, as one who talks over his shoulder. To suggest the position of two people in a car seat or in a carriage conversing, the head and *not* the trunk will turn to indicate actual talking over the shoulder. In this situation the angle, of course, will be wide. To suggest one speaking from a reclining position, the only indication required is weight on the back leg, head raised rather high and turned slightly to one side. For the reader in impersonative reading or pure reading it is never necessary to do more than indicate by the slightest bodily suggestion, the position and relation of characters in conversation.

(2.) Sex Limitation in Personating and Reading. Obviously the actor must be of the same sex as the part he is playing unless he is playing a comedy rôle or is so able to disguise himself in make-up and voice that the audience does not know the difference.

In personating, however, the reader may be of either sex in any kind of a personation *unless* the literal action of a supposed male character is such that a lady could not accomplish without vulgarity. A male reader may personate either sex, but a lady is sometimes limited in personating a man. For example, there are selections representing a drunken man which a man may personate without offending the good

taste of any one, but which if literally personated by a woman would be coarse and undesirable. There is rarely any action of the most eccentric woman, however, that, if proper at all, could not be given by a man impersonator.

In impersonative reading or pure reading, the reader is not limited by sex at all. Since suggestion is the fundamental requisite of reading, all that is necessary to be suggested can be done by either sex without a thought being given to the reader himself.

It is good to remember that the reader in reading is always *himself;* that the reader in personating is himself in the background but some one else in the foreground, and that the actor is *always some one else.*

CHAPTER VIII

PERSONATING

Definition Elaborated.—Personating is the most literal and least suggestive form of reading. It means first, *literal action* without the aid of costume, make-up, properties, scenery or stage accessories of any kind, and second, it means literal characterization in voluntary voice changes when necessary. When personating the reader may walk about the platform, assuming the gait and movements or the poise of the character to be represented; he may complete every movement in handling or indicating imagined objects mentioned or obviously connected with the selection. One definite thing to be remembered about the art of personating is that it *must never be employed when rapid change of characterization is necessary,* as in conversation among two or more speaking characters. Only when one character is assumed without interruption through a long speech, whether in soliloquy, implied dialogue or direct address, is personating feasible.

Type of Selection for Personating.—The general type of selection for the art of personating may be called, *The Personation,* which may be recognized in the following literary forms: soliloquy, implied dialogue and direct address. It is to be understood, how-

ever, that although the selection may be in one of these literary forms, it need not be considered as a personation unless, according to the author's purpose, *literal action* is primarily essential for adequate presentation. Characterization and mood must be secondary.

The first form of the personation which enables the reader to be nearest like the actor is the *Personated Soliloquy,* which indeed differs from the Acting Soliloquy only in the fact that it does not require as essential, scenery, properties and stage effects. The reader represents a certain person, normal or eccentric, engaged in some particular action while meditating on some subject more or less intimately connected with what he is at the moment doing. A splendid example of the Personated Soliloquy is recognized in *The Irish Girl and the Telephone,* by Bailey and Schell.* Here is represented an Irish servant girl who has never seen a telephone. She is discovered talking to herself while sweeping or dusting the room. Her meditation concerns the telephone which she calls the "little box." As she is meditating, suddenly by her action and speech, the audience is made to realize that the 'phone has rung. Then follows her conversation over the 'phone and her meditation on the things she hears. The reader in examining the selection sees that the predominating feature is literal action. He has noted that the business does not actually require the scene nor the real telephone, broom, chair, table, etc., but that the situation does require moving about and ob-

*Werner's *Readings,* No. 38.

jective gesture in handling the imaginary telephone receiver in order to give the complete comedy effect. If the entertainer is a woman, and she cares to have the costume with the stage scenery and all the properties, she becomes an actress for the time being and is then acting in soliloquy. Careful study of the selection will reveal, however, that none of the accessories is necessary, so the piece may be presented through personating. This particular selection *could* be given through impersonative reading, making the Irish characterization the primary essential and eliminating literal action, but the selection would lose much of the effect intended by its author.

Another example of the Personated Soliloquy is *In the Pantry,* by Mabel Dixon.* The character represented is a little boy meditating on the advisability of disobeying his mother and eating the mince pie that his mother has left temptingly on the pantry shelf. After considerable wrestling with his conscience, he reaches up, takes down the pie and eats it. The literal action in standing on tiptoe and walking about to view the pie from different angles and the final pantomime of reaching for the pie and eating it add so much to the situation that the reader decides to personate rather than merely to characterize the boy in his child speech and suggest the action through impersonative reading. It is funny if given as a Character Soliloquy, but it is *funnier* when given as a Personated Soliloquy.

The second form of the personation is *The Mon-*

*Anna Morgan's *Selections.* A. C. McClurg & Co.

ologue. It is written in implied dialogue and always represents a single character in supposed conversation with others while accomplishing literal action necessary to the piece. Sometimes these monologues are misnamed Acting Monologues and are given in costume and with properties. Some even go so far as to set a complete scene with stage furniture appropriate. Such a performance is inconsistent and absurd, for if the audience is not stimulated to imagine the scene and properties, why should it be required to imagine the other persons supposed to be in the conversation? This might not be such a serious mistake were it not for the fact that such attempts to create so much realism result in situations impossible for one entertainer to present without confusing the audience as to the intention of the speaker. For example, let us take *At the Matinée,* by Marjory Benton Cooke.* A young, frivolous girl enters the theater and looks around for her friend who has arrived earlier. She soon sees her friend, and stepping over the knees and feet of several people, supposed to be in the same row of seats with the friend, she finally seats herself. In the implied dialogue that follows, the speaker removes her hat and pins it to the back of the man who is supposed to sit directly in front of her. Now if the entertainer should use a real hat and attempt to pin it on the imaginary man in front of her, the hat would fall to the floor and the audience would lose the idea. If, however, the hat removing process is

**Monologues,* by Marjory Benton Cooke.

done in pantomime with an imaginary hat and pins, the audience is uninterrupted in its imagination of the articles and unconsciously follows the speaker's movements throughout, accepting the suggestions without question. When the candy boy is supposed to sell the young woman the box of chocolates, it becomes impossible for an imaginary boy to deliver a real candy box without employing legerdemain, so here the reader finds it necessary to pantomime the imaginary box. A real box, even if it were possible to produce it out of the air, would be in the way and become confusing to the audience when other imaginary articles are suggested. Consistency demands that all or none of the properties be imaginary, so in the case of the hat, candy-box, opera glasses and money, and the supposed patrons of the theater, the audience accepts all without question. *This selection would fail utterly if given by any other method than by personating.* Literal action is all important. There is no particular eccentric characterization or mood changes that are not connected with necessary action, so if given through impersonative reading, the selection would fail to express the author's purpose. Obviously the selection could not be given through acting, for it would be impossible to get all the scenery and properties necessary without also having an audience of real people on the stage and without changing the implied dialogue to pure dialogue in substituting the other parts. Any attempt to offer the piece through acting would be ridiculous, for the subject-matter is so unimportant that the expense of staging it would

be unwarranted. Personating is the *only* form of presentation for this monologue.

The third form of the personation is *The Eccentric Address* which represents a comedy orator in direct address to a supposed audience, the regular audience being the one actually addressed. In this type of the personation, the eccentric character burlesques real oratory and creates comedy situations by his greatly overdone action and gesticulation. He is privileged to walk about, or pound an imaginary pulpit, read an imaginary Bible or use any literal movement of head, hands, arms or legs in order to give a *complete* comedy characterization in overdrawn oratory. This type may be presented through all forms of delivery, but is best given through personating. When the speaker does not choose to employ literal action beyond facial expression in connection with vocal characterization, he may do so, but since in any burlesque oratory the speaker is *not limited,* we make no special classification for it when presented through impersonative or pure reading. When direct address is given *seriously* it can not be considered as belonging to the reader's art at all. It belongs to the art of the Public Speaker, or Orator.

An excellent example of the Eccentric Address is *The Ship of Faith,** a colored dialect sermon. The old colored preacher is exhorting his hearers to "get on boahd de ship ob faith," and his actions should be represented as typical of the race. The more literally

*Found in Clark's *Handbook of Best Readings.* Scribner's.

he marches back and forth and shakes his head, the more realistic will be the impression. The humor of the selection is greatly enhanced by characterization and the action is burlesque oratory. To put on a prince albert coat, wear spectacles and use a real pulpit and book would be inconsistent unless the entertainer also blackened his face and "made up" for the part as an actor.

The Character Series is considered the fourth form of the personation and is really the point in the classification where personating and impersonative reading may be used with equal effect. It is a composition written expressly to exploit several eccentric characters in comedy addresses or anecdotes. Each character's speech is a complete address and is not interrupted by conversation. Explanatory matter is introduced between each address, by the reader, and each successive speaker is assumed in a comedy speech independent of the others, so there is opportunity to make formal transition which is not possible in a quick interchange of speeches such as occur in regular narration with descriptive dialogue. The Character Series, then, is to be considered merely as a succession of eccentric addresses connected by explanatory material into one complete theme. *The Debating Society,* by E. J. Hall,* is a good example of this type. A number of eccentric characters are engaged in "debatin' " on the question of "suppressin' th' press," and the selection offers opportunity for several types of

* Found in *One Hundred Choice Selections.* No. 28.

comedy characters to be literally personated. Here literal action is about equally important with characterization, as much of the humor lies in the peculiar movements of several of the debaters in speaking. The selection, of course, may be given through impersonative reading as well as through personating. It is for this reason that the Character Series is sometimes called the "common ground" for these two types of delivery.

Vocal Features of Personating.*—*(1.) Voluntary Adaptation of Voice to Characterization.* In assuming the vocal peculiarities of characters, the reader must be somewhat naturally endowed with imitative ability, for voluntary vocal change requires conscious imitation. There are five general ways in which the voice may be changed for personation.

(a.) CONSCIOUS CHANGE IN THE FOUR ELEMENTS: QUALITY, FORCE, PITCH, TIME. Every true teacher of public speech is familiar with the four elements of vocal expression, and it is assumed that the student who is prepared for professional work in the art of public reading is already sufficiently acquainted with the use of quality, force, pitch and time to make unnecessary any further explanation regarding their fundamental attributes. It is well, however, to offer an explanation of how these elements may be consciously expressed for the purpose of personating.

In order to do more than express the mood of curious or eccentric comedy characters it is necessary

*See Diagram C, in the Introduction.

to make some conscious changes in the voice using various combinations of the four elements. If mood alone were all that distinguishes abnormal characters from normal individuals there would be no need for these paragraphs on *conscious* vocal change. An expression of different moods will result in *unconscious* changes, for nature does not require us to think about the various means of indicating thoughts and feelings before expressing them. In imitation of the physical as well as the mental difference in people, however, a certain kinesthetic power of mental imagery is necessary, and a development of this power requires diligent observation together with countless attempts to transfer (or perhaps *translate* is the better word) our auditory imagery into a form of motor imagery. To imitate the voice of the child or an old person requires a little attention to quality and pitch in order to get the thin breathy note of the child or the slightly guttural tone of a querulous old man. By observing the difference in quality between the voice of a little girl and that of a little boy, a keen imitator may so reproduce the tone that an audience will know instinctively which sex is being represented. In personating the voice of a man or a woman, a difference in the abruptness of force, the depths of quality and the intermingling of breathiness in the vocalization, will leave no doubt in the mind of the audience as to which sex is being personated.

Besides the characteristics of age and sex, the *physical condition* of a character results in a peculiarity of quality, an eccentric turn or mannerism of pitch,

or an unusual application of force and time. A person with a cold in the head, a sore throat, a "cracked" or "husky" voice or a cleft palate must be consciously imitated. Mere expression of mood will not do. It may reflect the mental condition of one who is sick or languid, or lazy, but a conscious imitation of the tone quality, the time of utterance or the force in its different degrees and manner of application will better present the physical disability. Vocal peculiarities of inarticulate sounds, such as swallowing, hiccoughing, sneezing, coughing, clearing of the throat, drawling or hesitating are effected through the conscious application of the four elements in various degrees and combinations. The expression of some mental conditions requires more than mere mood indication in an attempt at literal characterization. The voice of an idiot, of an inebriate, of an insane person or of a stupid person will require for complete characterization the imitation of the voice by means of the elements in conscious adaptation. Of course, it should be understood from the first that all this conscious imitation will not be effective if mood and atmosphere are not also understood and expressed. Quality, force, pitch and time are ever present in all speech whether unconsciously or consciously used. They can be recognized in connection with all other forms of vocal imitation and are inseparable from them, but in personating and in impersonative reading, where so much literal characterization is required, these elements serve a double purpose in the unlimited conscious use which may be made of them.

(b.) CONSCIOUS IMITATION OF SPEECH MECHANICS IN PRODUCING DIALECTS. By the term *"dialect"* we mean the speech of foreigners who are attempting American or English speech. This term does not include localisms or provincial peculiarities of speech. A dialect is a recently acquired language imperfectly articulated, misaccented and mispronounced, and highly colored by traces of the native atmosphere and habits of speech. A true dialect can not be written—it can only be suggested by following as closely as possible a spelling which will indicate in a measure the variation of a word from its correct English form, but the most important feature of a dialect, the peculiar national atmosphere of a people can not be represented in print. The only way to personate a dialect is to study everything about the people who use it and gradually to absorb the peculiarities of enunciation and pronunciation *along with* the unusual mood of the people and the atmosphere of their daily life. It is ridiculous for a student to imagine he can personate a dialect by merely pronouncing the words as he finds them in the book of selections. One who has never lived among the Scotch or Welsh or Irish people should never hope to reproduce their dialect until he has at least had an opportunity to study one who speaks the dialect naturally. Most people who attempt dialect merely give an exhibition of miserably pronounced English. No teacher can teach a dialect. He may be able to correct little faults in the speech mechanics of one who has already studied and absorbed the atmosphere of a certain dialect, but he

should never attempt to teach it until the student has had first-hand study in the national traits and the actual speech of foreigners who have learned to speak English. After one has studied the people he wishes to imitate, a great deal of help may be gained from a knowledge of speech mechanics and the way different nations vary in their combination of English diphthongs, simple vowels and consonants, but it must be remembered that these variations are *secondary.*

Let us take for example the first person, singular pronoun "I" as represented in print for the Irishman's pronunciation of it, namely, "Oi." To pronounce as the English diphthong "*oi*" does not give the Irish dialect at all. As a matter of fact the variation from the English pronunciation is *very* slight and is not caused by a change in the initial vowel of the diphthong, but rather by a difference in the use of the tongue in articulating the initial broad "a." This can not be arrived at mechanically with any degree of consistency until the ear of the imitator has carefully registered the sound as it has heard frequent conversations in the dialect and observed the little distinctions of accent, quality, variations of pitch, and the general atmosphere which gives rise to idiomatic expressions. Dialect personations should be attempted only by those who know the life of the people they are imitating. Many excellent imitators are able to "get by" with a dialect from mere imitation of vaudeville performers or readers who themselves have been able to reproduce the real dialect, but the safest way is to make a study of the people to be imitated.

After having lived in New York for a time, the imitative person may acquire a fairly accurate representation of the New York Jew. To live among the Pennsylvania Dutch is the only way to acquire their dialect. A few of the dialects which it is possible to study in America are: the Scotch, the Irish, the German, the Dutch, the French, the Italian, the Swede, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Russian Jew, the German Jew, the Polish, the French Canadian and the American Indian. Of course it is possible to study every dialect in the world for a very superficial imitation of them but most of the dialects not mentioned above are so infrequently found in the United States that a real atmospheric study of them would be difficult. Only those nationalities which are so numerous in America that they settle in colonies are capable of thorough study. Even settlement study is never as satisfactory as the study of people in their own native land. Their customs and habits of living together and their individual traits of character afford many hints to the personator who would reproduce these same traits in a broken tongue. Just as one who lives in France two or three years will be better able to speak and understand the French language than the student who learns to speak it by studying a book in school, so the reader of dialect can do his best work if he studies his people in their native environment.

(c.) Conscious Imitation of Local and Provincial Speech. What has been said about dialects applies largely to local or provincial speech. One should never depend on the representation in print.

The study should be at first-hand, although there is not so great a distinction in atmosphere as among the dialects, since American ideas and emotions are much the same everywhere in America, but there are subtler variations which the true artist will not disregard. Many forms of local or provincial speech are misnamed "dialects." The speech of the southerner and the negro are not dialects; they are provincial speech, or sectional variations of American speech just as American speech in reality is a colonial variation of the English speech. The reader of dialect very often finds occasion to imitate the speech peculiarities of the South, the Southwest, the Middle West, the East and of the rural and urban variety of these different sections in the United States. The speech of New York is different from that of Boston; the speech of the southern planter is different from that of the northern farmer, and the speech of the western rancher has its own peculiarities which differ from any of the others. A study of sectional speech reveals the fact that the variation is mostly in speech mechanics and in the use of the four elements. Pronunciation and idiomatic phrases are the principal distinguishing marks. For example the Boston representative is very likely to say, "I have an idear that mothah deah will be theah by foah-thehty." The New Yorker from Fifth Avenue would say it in about the same way except that he would not put the final "r" on "idea." The East Side urchin would pronounce the last word, "fō-thŭēty." In "Nawth Călă-ĭna" we should hear, "fōh-thŭtty." In Indiana it would be

"fōer-r thīr-rty," and so on. In Indiana alone there are six different varieties of speech which may be illustrated by the six ways of pronouncing the one word "going." They are: "gōĭng," "gōne," "gow-ăn," "gō-ĭn," "gwīne" and "gwan." These are called "localisms."

The observant reader as he travels about will orient himself to the different customs of the people and will instinctively develop an imitation of them. Further study of the causes of these variations will establish certain marked differences that may be used to great advantage in personating.

For a comparison of provincial speech with dialects, let us return for a moment to their consideration. Side by side with the differences in the use of speech mechanics, exists the differences in the use of the elements, especially quality and pitch. For example, in France the predominating voice quality is slightly nasal, while in Germany it is decidedly guttural. The difference is due, of course, to the predominating sounds of each language which influence the habitual placement of tone. Greater differences occur in the use of pitch than in quality. For instance, the Irishman habitually asks his direct questions with a downward inflection, as if declaring them, while the Englishman has the habit of giving the upward slide to assertions as well as to all questions. The Chinese use of pitch is entirely different from the European or American use in that the same words may have different denotation when placed in a different key. Consequently, in reproducing a dialect one should be

familiar with the native use of the language and observe how the transition to a new language will affect the resulting dialect. Dialects are, therefore, much more difficult to acquire than local or provincial speech, and the student should make his effort in personating apply to his own national peculiarities before taking up the peculiarities of other nations.

(d.) CONSCIOUS IMITATION OF SPEECH DEFECTS. One of the most popular forms of imitation used for personating is the imitation of speech defects, such as *stuttering, stammering, faulty articulation* (including the use of "l" for "r" and lisping, the cause of which is a misarticulation in the formation of "s"), and the *speech of the hare-lip,* or one who has a cleft palate. To imitate speech defect is not so easy as it looks. Many readers attempt it and fondly imagine that they are succeeding when in reality they are overdoing and burlesquing the defect. The mere repetition of an initial letter sixteen or twenty times, or the repetition of syllables in any word that happens to occur is not at all like stuttering. The audience may laugh at the effect it produces but soon tires of it and is no longer amused. There are several reasons for stuttering and when the reader learns the real causes of this form of speech defect, he can reproduce it with a naturalness that will not grow tiresome or cause the other important feature of presentation to be lost sight of.

Again as in the reproduction of dialect or provincial speech the teacher can be of use only in explaining causes and illustrating forms of articulation. The student himself must observe closely the accompany-

ing of actions, manners and customs of those who use eccentric forms of speech. Then the teacher, if he understands it himself, can give valuable hints and suggestions in further perfecting the representation.

(e.) SONG IMITATION. If a reader is not musical, it is best that he refrain entirely from imitating singing, but if he has a good "ear" for music with a proper sense of rhythm and time, there are occasions where the literal imitations of the singer add to the humor or comedy of the situation. A reader should not attempt literal singing in the presentation of serious matter. In almost every case the voice in song unaccompanied by a musical instrument has a peculiar disquieting effect upon an audience, and instead of the serious impression intended it often produces the opposite effect. Imitation of song is dependent upon fixed quality and pitch variation, and may, of course, for comedy purposes include all that has been said about dialect and speech defects.

(2.) Involuntary Change of Voice Expressing the Varying Moods. It has already been stated that mood changes underlie all presentation, and are a factor of expression in every form of characterization. In personating, however, just as in acting, mood representation is not sufficient to produce the realistic performance intended, so literal or voluntary changes are added to give the realistic touch. Running throughout the speech of the character thus realistically personated, are the changing moods which involuntarily color the voice and modulate the melody, but which never overshadow the peculiar or fixed vocal char-

acteristic assumed in the beginning of the characterization. For instance, in *The Ship of Faith,* a personation of a colored preacher, all the changing moods may be expressed while still keeping the peculiar qualities and provincial speech of the negro. These vocal changes due to mood are unconscious and are the result of natural laws. When the public reader wishes to express love, hate, anger, deceit, melancholy, sorrow, joy, etc., his voice unconsciously responds with the proper quality, force, pitch and time, to give emphasis and variety to his thoughts and feelings. The term *Public* Reader is used to distinguish from the beginner, or the silent reader who has not been used to audience conditions and can not yet express even moods unconsciously. Let it be said again that in all this discussion of personating and in the discussion of reading which is to come afterward, the preliminary study of elocution and simple reading is presupposed.

Actional Features of Personating.*—*(1.) Literalness in All Action.* In speaking of *literal action* we mean all action including all forms of *bearing* and of *pantomime.* When literal pantomime is mentioned it refers merely to literal gesture of the head, hands and limbs, *and* to literal facial expression, but does *not* include bearing. When literal facial expression is referred to, it does not include gesture. On the other hand literal gesture excludes facial expression. Bearing is either literal in both poise and carriage, or it

*See Diagram C, in the Introduction.

is suggestive. Later we shall find that in impersonative reading we may use *literal* facial expression, but *suggestive* gesture and bearing, while in pure reading we are limited to all *suggestive* action. In personating, however, we may use literalness in *all* action. In bearing we pay especial attention to any eccentricity of carriage including the gait, or walk of the character, the peculiarities of reciprocal movements and the oddities in other movements, such as sitting, rising, falling, or the nervous movements of one who has rickets, Saint Vitus Dance, etc. There are peculiarities of poise also which must be taken into consideration for the complete action necessary in personating. The standing or sitting posture offers many opportunities for personating which a student may readily observe and imitate. Here again as in vocal reproduction, observation and imitation are the only ways to accomplish true characterization.

In pantomime (action of the head, hands and limbs and of facial expression) we have the most frequent literal use. In the great mass of material suited to the reader, there is very little which actually requires complete reproduction of carriage, but in pantomime there is constant need of it. The movements of the hands, first subjectively in indicating a peculiar mood, second, indicatively in pointing out objects and in indicating size, distance, measurements, etc., third, in peculiarities of movements, such as the trembling or nervous hand and the motions due to diseased conditions in Saint Vitus Dance, rickets, palsy, imbecility, insanity, and drunkenness, and fourth, the

handling of imaginery objects in which the hands describe the same movements that would be made if the real objects were there—all these motions find a place in making the action real while leaving the surroundings to the imagination of the audience. Facial expression, of course, must be consistent with the other indications of peculiarity whether it be merely the unconscious reflexion of mood or the conscious assuming of a peculiarity of feature, such as a protruding lip, a closed eye, a wrinkled forehead, a twist to the mouth or an extended jaw. There are certain recurring mannerisms—a blinking eye, a moving scalp, a wrinkling nose, or nervous movements of the lips and the tongue, and there are natural movements in biting, chewing and pursing the lips, which are never necessary except in personating, where detailed action is essential to the humor of the selection.

(2.) Technique of Action in Personating. The entire body must be consistent in its movements in reflecting the word of the character, which, of course, is the greatest factor in any characterization. If the face reflects fear, the entire body must become concentric in attitude, and show in every line of position the natural bodily response to the emotion. For the body to be erect, or at ease while the face mechanically distorts in fear, the effect is comic, or at least is not realistic enough to be convincing. Since in personating, realistic action is the primary requisite, it must be complete in every detail.

The most prominent feature of action in personating is literal objective gesture. In handling imaginary

objects, the fingers and palm must be careful to keep consistent with the shape of the object suggested. For example, let us imagine a character reading a letter which on the first page gives encouragement to him, but on the back of the page says something that plunges him into despair. The action while reading the letter is important, so care must be taken to hold the imaginary letter as one would hold a real letter and not merely spread out the hand flat. The thumb and finger of one hand will naturally be in opposition at the upper corner of the supposed page. While the other hand will be the width of the page distant and about the length of the page lower down. The eyes of the reader will focus between the hands. When the page is turned, the movement of the hand should correspond. The student in preparing the selection should use a real letter until he becomes accustomed to the "feel" of his movements and then he will find it easy to make the audience see in imagination the paper which is not there.

Whenever literal objective gesture is attempted, care must be taken to give the action of replacing the objects assumed to be handled before taking up others. For instance, let us suppose the reader is personating an old woman at a quilting party. She is engaged in cutting squares of cloth and sewing them on the patch quilt while gossiping with the others supposed to be present. From time to time she picks up the imaginary shears, cuts or trims the edge of a square, *replaces the shears,* takes up her needle and sews again. The failure to replace the shears *might* not

be noticed by the audience, but it is likely to be, especially if the reader in the act of cutting *forgets,* and abruptly starts the sewing process. Perhaps the failure to replace a supposed article can be illustrated best in the Monologue, *"At the Matinée."* This monologue has no merit except as a piece of comedy action and if the action has any merit at all it must be in its exactness and detail. In this selection the young woman takes off her hat, first removing numerous hatpins which she holds in her mouth. When the hat is off she puts the pins back in the hat and fastens it to the seat in front of her. One young woman while working on this selection spoke her lines at that point in the piece as if the pins were in her mouth, but presently forgetting the pins, she opened her mouth and laughed heartily after which she resumed her speech, mumbling the words as if the pins were still in her mouth. Soon without the pantomime of removing the pins she began eating the imaginary chocolates. Her instructor told her that the audience would be concerned lest she had swallowed the hatpins if she should forget to replace them in the hat. As a matter of fact probably nine out of every ten would *not* notice just what was wrong but there would be a sort of subconscious impression that *something* was wrong. The greatest harm done, however, is to the artist herself who has failed to imagine *completely* the objects with which she has to deal. Later in more suggestive work, the student may find that her lack of imagining completely the essential details in personating will make her careless in her

choice of details for suggestion. The matter of replacing imaginary objects always seems trivial to the novice, but it is the very point on which the success or failure of some bits of personating depend. In impersonative reading or pure reading, since there is never a necessity for more than *suggestive* objective gesture, the replacing of the suggested object is never considered. The purpose of literal objective gesture is to make the audience *see the object indicated by the pantomime.* If the pantomime is consistent the purpose is always realized.

In the Monologue, the speaker must acquire a consistent listening attitude while the imagined character is supposed to be speaking. Plenty of time must be given for these fancied replies, and the facial expression and gesture of the reader while listening must be in keeping with the impression he is supposed to receive. Much of what the imagined speaker is supposed to say is understood by the audience through the pantomime of the reader himself during the listening moments.

The reader in personating differs from the actor in his attitudes and positions on the stage only in the fact that he rarely turns his back on the audience. The actor sharing the attention of the audience with others on the stage may frequently turn his back squarely on the audience and even talk up stage to another, but the reader alone on the stage has at all times the entire attention of the audience and can not afford to lose it for an instant. He therefore will arrange his action so that it will never be necessary to turn com-

pletely away from them. He may walk diagonally up stage, be constantly moving from one side to the other, but since he is a reader, not an actor, it behooves him to keep facing his audience as much as possible.

The Use of a Chair and Personal Properties.— By *personal properties* we mean the incidentals which are a part of the reader's habitual wearing apparel and are never transferred to or from any supposed character. A woman's handkerchief, a man's watch or eye-glass would be considered in the nature of a personal property, whereas a letter, newspaper, book, box of chocolates, hat, gloves, muff, dish of ice-cream, cup of tea, or playing cards would be classed under general or transferable properties. The distinction is here made because there are some readers who insist that the use of "certain" properties are effectual and not noticeably inconsistent to any audience, so we have classified the "certain" properties as personal properties, for it is obviously true that transferable properties can *not* be used consistently. To be absolutely consistent in the appeal to the imagination of the audience, even personal properties should not be used. When the audience understands at the beginning of a monologue that it is to imagine the scene, the furniture and the other characters, it is prepared to imagine *everything* connected with the scene except the personality and the action of the one character represented. It does not require the real properties to be present and in many cases it would be confused if some were produced while others were left to the imagination. The mind of an audience once

accustomed to real objects finds it harder to recognize imaginary objects during the progress of the same selection, for instance if a reader sits at a real table with real books or real dishes, and engages in implied dialogue with an imaginary companion who in the course of the dialogue passes him an imaginary plate of toast, the audience in nine cases out of ten will fail to grasp the idea. It is inconsistent, to say the least, to expect that the audience will not be able to imagine the table and the other dishes as well as the companion or the plate of toast. It is inconsistent, therefore, to employ *any* transferable properties at all and it is *better* to dispense with the personal properties as well, for then there is sure to be no confusion on the part of the audience.

It is easier to induce an audience to imagine something that is not before it at all than to make it "recreate" a real object and imagine it is something else. For instance, if a reader in personating a woman rubbing clothes over a washboard, goes through the pantomime with no articles of assistance whatever, the audience will see the picture far better than if the reader used the back of a chair for a washboard and a scarf or newspaper in place of the garment to be washed. The existence of anything, unless it is exactly the object represented, is more confusing to the imagination than nothing at all. It is upon this fact that the following principle is based: *Unless all properties and furniture can be just what is represented, there should be no properties or furniture employed.*

An ordinary chair should not be considered as a property or special stage furniture. It is a convenience. Just as the platform floor is convenient to stand on, so is the chair convenient to sit on, but it need not be a special chair fitting any particular description in the monologue. It is not to be considered by the audience at all. In a monologue or soliloquy to be personated, a chair conveniently placed before the selection is begun enables the reader to sit or rise and continue his literal action. Just as no one ever thinks of the platform on which the speaker stands, so no one ever thinks of an ordinary chair on which the reader may care to sit in order to carry on action representing a person who is seated.

Treatment of Personation within Personating.— It very frequently happens that in a monologue the speaker is supposed to be reproducing a previous conversation with some one for the benefit of his present listener. There is a temptation to leave the original character and assume literally the voice and action of the persons quoted. The question arises then, how far is this secondary personation permissible without inconsistency? If the original character is obviously of such a temperament that he would naturally imitate the manners and voice of those he quotes, the reader may go as far as he can *without losing the identity of the original character of the monologue.* In most cases, however, the original character would do just as anybody would do in repeating a conversation; he would assume the mood and perhaps a suggestion of the manner of those he quoted but he would not be

likely to imitate the voice or the facial expression. In the case of a reader personating a professor of elocution, he would, of course, assume the characters literally, for it would be consistent for a professor of elocution to do so. More often than not the original character of a monologue is either a normal person involved in a good deal of action or else a peculiar individual who would not know how to give a literal representation of those he quotes. It is safe to say that in almost every monologue the original character merely tells what the past conversation has been and does not even swerve from his own mood. If his mood is purely mental, he will never do more than give the thought of the one quoted, but if his mood is highly emotional it is likely that he will reflect somewhat the mood of the one he quoted.

In *Higher Culture in Dixie* the old colored woman is telling "Sis" Mirandy how she cured her daughter of atheism, and in quoting her own words and those of her daughter she unconsciously uses the mood in which the past conversation was carried on, but she will *not* lose her own voice in quoting the words of her daughter. Negroes are very emotional, and the old lady will live over again in suggested action part of the scene, but she never will completely leave her own character, nor forget her one listener, "Sis" Mirandy. The audience should never lose sight of the old lady herself and "Sis" Mirandy, and they should see the daughter only in the dim circumstances suggested by her mother.

The position of the original speaker in a monologue

remains in the attitude of spokesman to his original listener. He does not in quoting turn from side to side as does the reader in presenting two speaking characters. Again he would do as any person in real life would do. He would not be likely to employ, or even know about, the elocutionary "trick" of the side to side movement which suggests two persons conversing.

In quoted conversations the words "said he," "said she," etc., should be repeated frequently in the character of the original speaker so that he will remain identified with the character at all times and so that the audience may have no chance to confuse him with the character he is quoting.

The Treatment of Vocal Imitation within Personating.—In these paragraphs we are using the term "vocal imitation" in the sense of mimicry of nature sounds or mechanical sounds. It does not refer to the imitation of *human* voice. When we speak of literal imitation of a person in voice or action, we call it *personation* but the imitation of things not human we shall call merely *imitation.*

The question, "What shall we do in personating a character who is supposed to imitate cat-calls, the bark of a dog, etc.?" may be answered in the same way that the question concerning personation within personating was answered. If the original character is supposed to be an imitator or a clown, he would in all probability imitate, but if he is an ordinary character, he would not. The situation would be most unusual in which a character would literally imitate.

In Mark Twain's *Jim Wolf and the Cats,* a rather eccentric old man is telling a friend (or a group of friends) of a boyhood prank played on Jim Wolf. In the course of his talk he mentions the cats "yow-ow-owling." Now the old man would be likely to approach an imitation but he would not be able to give an exact one. For the reader to drop the old man's character and literally reproduce the cat-call would be inconsistent. The important element in the selection is the old man himself and what he does in telling the tale. It is more humorous to see the old man suggesting the cat imitation than it would be to see the reader step out of the character and give a literal imitation.

The Use of Literal Song in Personating.—Since literalness in voice and action is the primary essential of personating, and since singing is distinctly a human accomplishment it may be reproduced literally without inconsistency in any of the four forms of the personation. If the character speaking is *telling* about another person who has sung, he will *not* sing. He will merely repeat the words. But if during the acting of the original character in a soliloquy or a monologue, the character himself is supposed to sing, he may do so literally if he *can* sing—if not, he had better content himself with chanting in a monotone.

In *Mammy's Li'l Boy,* by H. S. Edwards, since the action of holding and rocking the baby and the assumption of the provincial speech of the negro are essential, the reader may croon the "Bye-o, baby boy, o-bye" with prefect consistency. If the reader prefers

to stand and simply *suggest* the holding of the baby, giving the selection as a character monologue through impersonative reading, the singing may be fittingly suggested since the selection is not humorous and the tune is unimportant to the mood of the piece. There are many soliloquies and monologues in which the actual singing of the character is important, and when this is the case the real tune should be employed.

Relation of Personating to Impersonative Reading.—Before leaving the subject of Personating it is well to show its relationship to Impersonative Reading, the next step toward suggestion. While in the present chapter we have shown that literal action is the primary requisite for personating, and that characterization and mood were secondary considerations, we shall show in the next chapter that literal action drops out of consideration and gives place to vocal and facial characterization as the primary requisite with expression of mood and suggestive action as a secondary factor. Impersonative Reading is the intermediate step, therefore, between Personating and Pure Reading.

CHAPTER IX

IMPERSONATIVE READING

Definition Elaborated.—Impersonative reading is that phase of the reader's art which attempts characterization as literally as possible in voice and facial expression, but in all other action gives mere suggestion. It is not confined to the representation of one character as is personating, but may represent many in conversation while the reader changes from one character to another and back again to narration in his own person. It is the "common ground" between personating and pure reading, and is the kind of delivery applied to a great mass of humorous or character readings that seek to portray eccentric or comedy types in conversation with one another. It affords a means of compromising between entire literal presentation and wholly suggestive presentation.

Type of Selection Suitable for Impersonative Reading.—*The Character Reading* is the name given to that type of literature calling for eccentric characterization and is distinguished further by the fact that it may represent ***more than one*** character in conversation. Here, of a necessity, complete literal action can not be reproduced because of the limitations imposed on the reader requiring the rapid change from character to character. These rapid changes do not

permit walking about or pantomiming the handling of objects. There is time only for mere suggestion in everything except facial expression and vocal change which can be done instantaneously and without attention being called to the means of transition.

There are two sub-forms of the Character Reading which are just like the first two forms of the Personation except that the need for literal action is absent. Since literal action is unimportant they are called *Character* Soliloquy and Monologue instead of *Personated* Soliloquy and Monologue, and should be presented according to the principles suggested for impersonative reading.

The other two sub-forms of the Character Reading are unlike any of the forms of the personation in that they represent more than one person in actual conversation. *The Character Play* is any piece of dramatic literature in pure dialogue form whose chief characters are eccentric and when given by a single entertainer, can neither be acted nor personated, but must be rearranged in descriptive dialogue form and presented through impersonative reading. Here the reader must change instantly from character to character and back to bits of description, a limitation which makes anything like literal action impossible, but which may permit the instantaneous changes in facial expression and voice. The same may be said of the *Character Narrative* which differs in form from the Character Play only in the fact that it was originally in descriptive dialogue form and contains longer and more frequent passages of description or

narration. The technique of delivery for the two forms is practically the same except that the converted form of the dialogue in the Character Play gives the descriptive passages in the *present* tense, while the Character Narrative is written in the *past* tense, and the reader conforms to the tense in his presentation.

Vocal Features of Impersonative Reading.— What has been said concerning the vocal features of Personating applies in the same way to Impersonative Reading in both *voluntary* and *involuntary* changes. A word in addition may be said regarding the use of the voice in the delivery of descriptive and narrative passages which does not apply to personating. The voice is the reader's own and changes involuntarily with the changing mood and atmosphere of the description. Indirect discourse will be colored by the mood of the one indirectly quoted and the atmosphere of a scene or situation will, in a like manner, influence the voice of the reader as he describes it. If the description is a mere matter-of-fact statement, the reader will simply tell it to the audience almost as in direct address, but if the description is emotional, such as the description of a horse race or a fight with fire, the voice of the reader will involuntarily express the emotional mood of the passage and may even reflect the mood of the onlookers. This is especially true if the emotional importance of the scene is greater than the mere sense, or meaning. Further treatment of vocal features in description will be taken up under the subject of Pure Reading.

Actional Features of Impersonative Reading.—

Here in the actional features of Impersonative Reading we find the greatest difference from Personating. Almost all action in impersonative reading is suggestive rather than literal. The only phase of action which is employed literally is facial expression which may be changed instantly without calling attention to the mode of transition. A *fixed feature*, such as a closed eye for Squeers in *Nicholas Nickleby;* a *recurring mannerism*, such as the blinking eye of "Blinky" Lockwood in *The Fortune Hunter;* or the *feature motions* of the mouth, jaws and tongue in tasting or chewing which once in a while seems necessary to bring out the humor of a characterization—these expressions may be employed for comedy effect in impersonative reading. All other action is either suggested or entirely eliminated. The *bearing* of a character may be dimly suggested in the standing position, but the suggestion of sitting or reclining must be through a descriptive phrase rather than by any initial motion toward the action. *Carriage* is eliminated from consideration since it is obvious that no walking about can be done consistently while so frequently changing from one character to another. All the peculiarities of *gait* are to be suggested through descriptive phrases—not by any attempt at initial movement. *Gesture* (head, hand and limb movements not concerned with bearing) may be strongly suggestive. The initial movement of the hand and arm in the act of shaking hands, the suggestion of holding a letter or a newspaper, the suggestive movement for holding up a wineglass in proposing a toast—all these

movements aid in picturing a situation but do not need to be completely carried out. Let us suppose a situation in which a drunkard is in conversation with his wife. The descriptive matter indicates that he lifts a glass while sneeringly taunting her, and that she in reply dashes the glass out of his hand to the floor. If literal pantomime were to be carried out, the reader in assuming the eccentricity of the drunkard would hold his fingers literally as if holding the glass and would go through the motions of lifting it high above his head and then back to his lips. Then in rapid change to the character of the woman, the reader would have to return the man's gesture and assume the literal striking motion of the woman as she utters her harsh words. All this would take unnecessary time and would call attention to the *manner of transition* from one character to another. How much more simple and effective is the suggestion when the reader in the character of the man merely lifts the hand a little way with the fingers loosely apart, not attempting literally to encircle a supposed glass, but allowing the audience to create the picture independently? As the reader thus speaks the sneering line, he may instantly interrupt himself in the wife's character and, forgetting the one hand slightly raised, will allow it to relax gracefully while the other hand raises quickly in the initial motion suggesting violence as the wife speaks her line and follows with her eyes the falling of the imaginary glass.

The privilege of descriptive matter to be given by the reader himself between lines spoken by characters,

makes possible the suggestion for any kind of action or situation with the very slightest movement in gesture. Even literal facial expression and voluntary vocal change is unnecessary except in eccentric or comedy rôles.

Stationary Position of the Reader in Impersonative Reading.—It may be laid down as a steadfast rule that *all forms of selections which require instantaneous change from character to character or to description must be presented from a stationary position in the center of the platform from which point the reader will not move more than one step in any direction.* All that is necessary in action can be suggested from this stationary position.

In impersonative reading, therefore, the use of a chair is never necessary. The abrupt rising or sitting in changing characters would call attention to the transition and would make an important feature out of what is merely incidental. All action that can be described in narration may be suggested either in vivid phrase or in gesture, but whenever it is obviously incidental and can not be expressed without giving it undue importance, it should be left out. Perhaps the best way to remind the student of the limit of action in impersonative reading is to formulate this principle: *READING, whether impersonative or pure, may be presented with the desk and manuscript before the reader without loss of suggestion to the audience.* Of course, he may read from memory if he prefers, but he will stand erect, facing the audience in either case, and will merely suggest the opposition of his

characters in conversation by a slight turn of the face to the right and left. The scene is pictured by the reader out *beyond* the audience rather than on the platform with himself. The entire scene, characters and all are conceived by the audience as apart from the reader on the platform. In *personating,* however, the scene is imagined as on the platform directly before the audience, and the one actual character represented moves about in that scene. The imagination of the audience centers about *him* and not apart from him for a moment. In personating, obviously a desk and manuscript would be in the way and therefore the Personation must always be delivered from memory. The Character Reading, however, may be given from memory or from the page with equal power of suggestion to the audience.

Treatment of Personation within Impersonative Reading.—By personation within impersonative reading we mean, of course, the attempt at characterization which an eccentric character would be likely to make in quoting the words of another speaker in a former conversation. How far would he be likely to leave his own personality in order to assume the voice and manner of the one he quotes? Since in impersonative reading the action of the original eccentric character must be suggestive in all except facial expression, it is clear that the described action of the quoted character will be even more slightly suggestive, for his action must not cause the audience to forget the original speaker and the present tense situation. The facial expression of the original

speaker will in most cases merely reflect the mood of the person he quotes. The voice of the original character should not lose its conscious peculiarity, but may reflect the mood of the person quoted, in unconscious changes of the elements. A good maxim to follow is: *Never get out of the original character so far that the audience thinks of the one quoted rather than the original eccentric character.* One way of keeping the original character constantly before the audience while quoting the lines of a past conversation, is to insert frequently the words, "said he," "said she," "I said," or "I say."

Treatment of Vocal Imitation within Impersonative Reading.—Rarely do we find occasion for vocal imitation with the speech of an eccentric character in impersonative reading, but when it does occur, it should be treated just as it was suggested for personating. *Jimmy Butler and the Owl* offers an opportunity for the Irishman to imitate the owl's "Who-o-oo" and it should be done *as the Irishman would be likely to do it,* not in literal imitation of an owl's note. It sometimes happens, however, that in a humorous selection, the description indicates in phonetic combination certain sounds which the author intended to be literally reproduced. When this is the case, literal imitation may be employed, but in that case the selection can not be frankly classed under a Personation, Character Reading or Interpretative Reading. It is just a "Stunt," or an "Imitation." Fred Emerson Brooks' *Barnyard Melodies* illustrates this type. The same general rule quoted in the previous paragraph

applies also to imitation within impersonative reading.

The Use of Song in Impersonative Reading.—The supposition that the character required to sing is humorous or eccentric offers sufficient reason for his literally reproducing the tune. If the reader has an ear for music and a musical voice, he may carry off a humorous bit of singing with excellent effect, but if he can not carry a tune, he had better be content with repeating the words of the song in a monotone.

In *Araminta's Ankle,* by Myrtle Reed, the old maiden aunt is supposed to sing to the tune of an old hymn certain improvised words calculated to annoy her niece, Araminta, who lies with a broken ankle in the next room. The young doctor who has forbidden the aunt to go into Araminta's room or speak to her, appears on the scene in the midst of the old lady's song. The quick change of words to the words of the hymn when she sees the doctor, affords comedy which is best appreciated in the literal reproduction of tune in the shrill, quaint voice of the old maid.

Our Baby at Rudder Grange, by Frank R. Stockton, offers another opportunity for literal singing when the narrator tells of walking the floor and singing to the baby improvised words to the tune of "Weak and Wounded, Sick and Sore." Since the reading is humorous and the tune of special importance, a literal reproduction of the tune will add to the effect and not seem out of place at all. It should be remembered, however, that it is never *absolutely necessary* to sing. The audience will get the idea and

much of the humor if the reader suggests the song by the use of a "one-pitch" tone.

The Treatment of First Person Narrative.— There are two ways of presenting a narrative written in the first person, and the choice should be influenced by the author's purpose. First, if the narrator is not important as a character in a present tense situation; if he may be understood as of no more importance than the reader himself in telling a story; or, in other words, if the selection could *as well* be given in the *third* person, or impersonally, it should be given as a Character Narrative, *just as if it were written* in the third person. Second, if the narrator *is* important as an eccentric character or as a normal character in a present tense situation, and it can be seen that the author intended the narrator to preserve his own personality at all times through the story, the selection is a Character Monologue or a Reading Monologue and any quoting of conversations by the speaking character will remain colored by the personality of the narrator. The Character Monologue or Reading Monologue *can not* be given in the third person because of the importance of the present tense situation.

When the narrator is *not* important in a present tense situation, the reader will omit the little unnecessary expressions, "said he," "said she with a smile," etc., as much as possible, just as he would do in a third person narrative, but in presenting the selections in which the narrator is important in the present tense situations, the reader will retain every one of those expressions and even supply more than the

author did if it seems necessary to the keeping of the original character. *Our Guides,* by Mark Twain, is an admirable example of first person narrative in which the narrator is unimportant as a character. The narrative could just as well be given in the third person without disregarding the author's purpose in the least. The characters of the Doctor and the Frenchman may be literally assumed in the voluntary voice change and the facial expression, for the presence of the words "I" and "we" does not affect the situation at all. In *Shamus O'Brien,* by J. E. LeFaum, where the narrator himself is a character (shown by the dialect) in a present tense situation, it is obviously the author's purpose to keep him before the audience, and the conversation Shamus reports is all along colored by his own personality. It is therefore classed as a Character Monologue.

CHAPTER X

PURE READING

Definition Elaborated.—Pure reading is the highest type of suggestive presentation and is employed in all that class of literature which requires merely the expression of mood in conversation and of atmosphere in descriptions. Here there is no attempt at realism. The reader stimulates the imagination of his hearers to see the pictures and live the scenes apart from the reader himself or the platform on which he stands. Unlike personating, which seeks to make the picture of one character in imaginary surroundings doing bits of action within the limit of the platform, pure reading carries the mind of the audience away from the platform, out into the world of life, and stimulates the memory and the imagination to create introspectively a complete chain of imaginary pictures. This art is the most subtle of all the arts of the reader in its power of suggestion and requires years of study. The term "pure" reading must not be confused with ordinary reading aloud from the page. As used in this book, it means public reading of literature for the entertainment and education of the people. Almost any person of average intelligence can read a story from a book, but to present a piece of literature formally with all the subtlety of suggestion

in voice and actions through the varying moods of human life requires years of study first in acting, then in personating, later in impersonative reading, and at last in pure reading, before the highest development of artistic appreciation will be achieved.

Type of Selection for Pure Reading.—The *Interpretative Reading* comprises all the forms of literary composition (except argumentation, and exposition) whether soliloquy, implied dialogue, descriptive dialogue, narration, description or lyric composition in which neither literal action nor eccentric characterization is of any consequence, but in which the expression of *mood* is all important. When a selection is recognized as being important for the sake of its moods it may be classified under one of the following types according to its style of literary composition: *The Reading Soliloquy; the Reading Monologue; the Reading Play; the Descriptive Reading; the Narrative Reading; the Declamation; and the Lyric Reading.* The first two types are in form exactly like the forms used for personating and impersonative reading, but are distinguished from them by the lack of necessity for literal action or eccentric characterization. The Reading Play is like the Character Play except that it has no eccentric characters in the chief rôle. The Narrative Reading differs from the Character Reading in the same way. The Descriptive Reading, however, differs from every other type in that there are no conversations, and the reader is concerned wholly with painting a picture of a scene, event, or a person. Here the reader's art is at its

best when suggesting the atmosphere of a situation or a scene described. The Declamation is an address, notable examples of which are, Webster's *Reply to Hayne*, Grattan's *Reply to Mr. Corry*, and the like. The Lyric Reading is known as such because of its idealism and its universal appeal in poetic form. It is essentially emotional. It seems to crystallize some great moment in life that is the common experience of many. The mood is always intense and universal rather than personal. The Lyric may be in soliloquy, implied or expressed dialogue, narrative or descriptive forms. Tennyson's *Break, Break, Break* and *Crossing the Bar* and Browning's *Meeting at Night* are good examples of lyric readings.

Vocal Features of Pure Reading.—In pure reading the vocal changes are involuntary and are brought about solely by the changes of thought and emotion representing the mood of the *normal* characters in conversation or the atmosphere of situations, scenes and events. There is no attempt at conscious imitation of quality, pitch, force, or time, in order to represent any eccentricity of character, for pure reading does not deal with abnormal persons. It may deal with humor and the very gayest of moods, but not to such a degree that it makes the character peculiar. There are no external marks of distinction between characters. Nothing but the mood or the descriptive passages in the selection will indicate transition of one character's speech to that of another.

A word should be said concerning the assuming of moods not assigned specifically to any character in

the narrative. Descriptive matter when merely explanatory, should be given in a normal mental mood, but when the atmosphere becomes highly emotional, the reader if properly in the spirit of the selection will feel that atmosphere as the emotional mood of some possible witness to the scene. In the Ben Hur chariot race, for instance, the description becomes so highly emotional that the mere telling of the "whip writhing and hissing about the horses' heads" is not sufficient. The reader must express the atmosphere of the scene and the intense mood of Ben Hur. He accomplishes this by assuming the mood of the crowd of onlookers, and his utterances will be as intense as if he were representing one of the excited characters in the scene.

In indirect discourse, if the mood is emotional the reader will unconsciously color his voice to fit the mood thus indirectly quoted, but he will not use corresponding bodily action except in the most subjective sense. An intense situation, however, even though described in the third person, may call forth bodily as well as vocal suggestions of the atmosphere. Ordinary mental description, such as "said he, lifting his hat," or "said she, as she gave a glance from her clever black eyes," do not need intense treatment. Indeed, a great many of the "said he" and the "said she" phrases may be omitted altogether by the reader. He must take care, however, that all description necessary to a mental and emotional understanding of the situation should be retained unless such description may be expressed through the subjective action of the char-

acter or the tone of his voice. For instance, in the words "'Yes,' said Mary, smiling," all except "Yes" may be omitted if the reader smiles as he says "Yes." On the other hand, in the words "'Is Papa's little boy sorry?' said Mr. Todd as the persistent sunbeam kept stabbing the back of his neck. 'All right, Papa will stay here in the corner until Robert says he is sorry,'" nothing can be omitted, for the bit about the sunbeam is necessary to an understanding of the humor of the situation. The reader's own judgment if he studies his selections properly, will determine what his voice may suggest and what it will be necessary to explain through description.

In suggesting the voice of a crowd there is at first a bit of conscious attention to quality and vocal mechanics, in acquiring the suggestive tone. There is no attempt to personate a babel of voices (which would be impossible) but the voice slightly above the normal pitch, with placement back in the back part of the pharynx, and with slightly blurred articulation, has been found to suggest the voice of a crowd admirably. In Josephine Preston Peabody's *The Piper* when Kurtz and the crowd shout at the Piper, the reader has an opportunity to stimulate auditory imagery to hear the shout of fifty or a hundred people instead of one.

Actional Features of Pure Reading.—In pure reading all action is suggestive, and that phase of action known as carriage is not considered at all. Even subjective gesture and facial expression is more or less suggestive and at no time does it approach the

literalness of subjective gesture and facial expression used in impersonative reading.

Suggestive action (defined in the appendix) is the initial movement which, if carried to completion, will become *literal* action. The mere opening of the hand half extended toward the audience is enough to suggest the hand-shake. No accent or return is necessary, but immediate transition may be made to another gesture. The hand with fingers spread slightly and the palm toward the face is sufficient suggestion for the act of reading a letter—two hands not being at all necessary. In many cases no action at all is necessary, for the reader will merely give the contents of the letter to the audience impersonally. In order to be sure that a given gesture is actually suggestive of the thought to be conveyed, the reader in practising should begin with literal action and complete the movements a few times, after which the suggestion will gradually appear and increase as less and less of the complete motion is permitted. It may even be advisable in the case of working out a suggestion for an objective gesture to handle the object several times in the manner that the ultimate gesture is to suggest. In *The Soul of the Violin,* a Narrative Reading, which contains a long soliloquy by the old violin player, it is necessary faintly to suggest the attitude of playing. One who has never held a violin or tried to draw the bow properly across the strings will be unable to give an effective suggestion of playing. His hands will not rest easily in the initial position, and the occasional movements will not re-

spond to the natural rhythm of the speech. The most effective way to accomplish the suggestion for this action is, first, to hold a real violin and get the "feel" of the instrument in the hand. The movement of the bow should be tried a few times, and then, laying the instrument aside, the student should pantomime the action literally. In the final practice, the impulse to continue the pantomime will be checked after the initial movement, and a series of highly suggestive motions will be the unified result. No suggestive action can be successfully accomplished until an experience in the literal action has been had.

Another illustration is apt: In giving *John Burns of Gettysburg* the emotive description of old John as "he stood there picking the rebels off with his long brown rifle and bell-crowned hat," demands a suggestive attitude on the part of the reader. One who has never held a rifle to his shoulder will not easily assume the correct suggestive position for his hands and arms. To pantomime literally the holding of the imaginary rifle would be out of place, but a suggestion of the pantomime may be helpful, and the best method of acquiring the suggestion is to practise the two preceding steps, first using a real rifle, next giving the literal pantomime, and finally using the initial position in the raising of the rifle and halting the gesture at about the waist line, the left hand in front with the palm up and the right hand at the hip, palm inward and elbow back. If the weight is thrown forward on the left foot and the neck and head pushed forward intensely while the eyes look steadily in one direction, the suggestion is perfect.

In Ben Hur's chariot race the moment of the winning of the race by Ben Hur is intensely emotional. The reader, besides assuming the emotional tone with which he utters the words "the whip hissed," etc., will unconsciously assume the alert bodily attitude, weight forward, one arm elevated to the level of the head, the other to the shoulders while the uplifted hand gives an occasional movement at the wrist to suggest Ben Hur's action or what might be the sympathetic action of any one of the witnesses to the race in following the movement of the hissing whip. The action, as well as the voice, in emotional descriptive passages may suggest the atmosphere of excitement through the mood of some one supposedly present, although the reader may not use the character's own words.

Treatment of Mood Representation within Normal Characterization.—When in pure reading it becomes necessary for a normal character to quote previous conversations, no attempt is ever made at complete vocal or facial characterization, and there is very little effort made to reproduce the mood of the persons quoted. There is an occasional instance where a perfectly ordinary character is supposed to try to imitate some one in a former conversation in order to express the *unusual* mood of the person quoted. Whenever the mood is *usual,* as in the majority of cases, the original speaker in his own mood merely tells what was said. In *all* cases the action will be subjective in gesture and facial expression, and suggestive. In the case of the unusual mood reproduced, the imitation will never extend further than a volun-

tary change in the elements of voice. Since mood representation is all that is important in pure reading, the quoted conversations should merely color the mood of the person speaking. When Cassius quotes Cæsar's "Give me to drink, Titinius," he is endeavoring to make Brutus feel Cæsar's lack of manliness, so he introduces a slight imitation of Cæsar's whining tone. The reader must not step formally into Cæsar's character with supplicating gesture and anxious facial expression, but rather he must keep Cassius' ironical mood and attitude as he is talking to Brutus, showing only in the voice the suggestion of Cæsar's whine.

Treatment of Vocal Imitation in Pure Reading.— There are many occasions in pure reading where it is necessary to suggest strongly certain nature sounds which are represented for the sake of onomatopœia. Here the voice by a little conscious change in quality, pitch or time, may often give an extraordinarily subtle suggestion. It is needless to say that a literal imitation would be out of place in pure reading, but the suggestion embodied in the phonetic composition of the words themselves adds materially to the connotation which the author had in mind when he wrote the selection. Poe's *The Bells* and Tennyson's *Blow, Bugle, Blow,* are both onomatopœic and were written to suggest the sounds so graphically described. If mere thought or explanation of the different kinds of bells had been Poe's intention, he would not have repeated the word, "bells" in the obvious rhythm of the mood he wished to express. It was his intention to suggest the sounds of the different kinds of bells.

The reading of the *Bugle Song* does not need a literal imitation of the bugle call, but the word "blow" will be given longer time value than usual, and "dying" will in repetition suggest the dying notes if longer and longer quantity with correspondingly diminishing force be applied to the last syllable. Tennyson, himself, is the authority for this rendition. Some years ago he was asked by Mr. Ward, the great English scholar and friend of Tennyson, why he always prolonged the last syllable and subdued the force on the succeeding repetitions of the word "dying," and Tennyson replied that the whole idea *"sounded that way to him."* It is true that authors are not always competent authority on the oral expression of their own works, but when we are fortunate enough to learn at first-hand an author's purpose of connotation, we are accomplishing the ideal of all true reading if we carry out that purpose. Tennyson's purpose, according to Mr. Ward, was to suggest to the minds of all who hear the *Bugle Song* read, the vivid auditory imagery of the dying notes of a bugle call. Of course there was a deeper and more significant purpose in the spiritual suggestion inspired by the notes of the bugle, but Tennyson believed the one suggestion made more powerful the other.

It is extremely rare that a normal character is required to imitate, but if such is the case, the reader should only suggest the imitation in the slightest possible way. If the words "bells" and "dying" were put into the conversation of a normal character, there would be no real justification for suggesting the

sounds, because ordinary people are not likely to express themselves onomatopœically in conversation, but since these poems are lyrical and hence universal in their appeal, the reader may make the appeal more widely connotative by bringing out the onomatopœic effect.

The Suggestion of Song in Pure Reading.—Since pure reading is almost wholly suggestive, it follows that anything which attempts realism, where suggestion will do as well, is out of place. Literal singing is not advisable in pure reading. Aside from the fact that the mood of the song and ***not*** the tune is the essential thing, an unaccompanied song in the midst of a serious reading has a peculiar disquieting effect upon an audience. Even if the reader has a good voice and is able to pitch it at the right key, the effect is not so powerful as if read colorfully with a narrow range of speech melody. The mind of the audience is almost sure to be drawn away from the thought and the feeling in the words, and become concerned with the tune or the quality of the singer's voice. The reading of the words will be much more impressive and at the same time preserve the situation of the supposed singer in his surroundings. In Dunbar's *When Malindy Sings*, we have a poem which is more important for its mood than for any characterization of the speaker, who is telling about Malindy's beautiful voice. The speaker here is not even supposed to sing; he is merely repeating the words of the song that Malindy sometimes sings, and yet frequently we hear readers take Malindy's character and literally sing.

The mood of Malindy's admirer is all that is necessary for expression. Even the dialect is not necessary.

In the Burgundian defiance scene from *If I Were King,* by J. H. McCarthy, Lady Katherine is supposed to sing. Here the reader actually assumes the mood of Katherine while she sings, but he should not attempt the tune, for if he does the audience is sure to think more of the voice quality or the melody than the meaning of the song or its place in the story. In comedy readings, especially those frankly eccentric, the introduction of a tune often adds to the comedy, but in serious selections the reader will be more truly artistic if he is able to *suggest* to the imagination of his audience the beautiful song and the voice, apart from himself.

Many readers have a mania for "reciting to music," and are never willing to appear on a public program without an accompanist at the piano to assist in "making effective" *Aux Italiens* or *An Old Sweetheart of Mine* by the synchronous rendering of *Hearts and Flowers* or *Cavalleria Rusticana.* From the standpoint of an "act" in vaudeville, it may be considered effective, but as an artistic presentation by a reader, it is not to be thought of. If the piece is effective when accompanied by music, it is the musician who has produced the effect—not the reader. The music has a highly emotional effect, but is vague, and in almost every case so completely occupies the mind of the audience that it can not follow intelligently the thought of the selection. How many people who sing our church hymns know the meaning of what they

are singing? How many are there who get more than a general impression of the meaning of any song that they hear sung? The melody subtly takes the place of the meaning of the words and the audience is none the wiser. This can be easily demonstrated if the teacher will ask one of his best students to read at sight a familiar hymn. Nine out of ten students will find that the memory of the tune so dominates the reading that the sense is obscured.

The reader's art should be enough to suggest the situation and the sentiment of a selection without the aid of "stage effects" in the form of a musical accompaniment. When these effects are employed, the true impression is often lost altogether. The audience weeps rather indefinitely and murmurs, "Wasn't that beautiful?" while all the real beauty of the lines was swallowed up in a hazy conception of melody—sad melody which conveyed no meaning. Little humorous songs, written to be sung, may be read to their own accompaniment, but they should not be classed as real material for the reader's art. The point is that poems, written apart from any conception of music, are best interpreted without it. *A GOOD reader does not NEED an accompanist to make anything he reads effective.*

First and Third Person Narrative.—Since the reader in pure reading is concerned with no characterization of an eccentric or abnormal nature, and since mood alone is the predominating factor, narrative (except narration within a soliloquy, implied dia-

logue, or direct address composition) written in the first person will receive the same treatment as that written in the third person.

Most of Mark Twain's narratives are written in the first person. They are not to be considered as Monologues or Eccentric Addresses, for the narrator is not in any present tense situation. When conversations are quoted, they may be given as the original conversations without regard to the person of the narrator at all. The rule that "whenever the narration could as well have been written in the third person, it may be given without regard to the person of the narrator" applies in pure reading as it does in impersonative reading. In *A Critical Situation,* Mr. Clemens narrates an incident in which he and his friend, Harris, became involved. He quotes Harris, the young woman, her son and himself all in conversation. It is related in the past tense, and we are not concerned with the situation of the narrator at the time of his telling the tale. We are interested only in the events and conversations of the story. It could as well have been written in the third person, using the words, "As Harris and Clemens were seated," etc., instead of "As Harris and I were seated," thus making the narrative impersonal. In delivery, therefore, since the audience is not interested in the narrator as an important person in a present tense scene, the reader may use the first person just as it is written, but still feel free to assume the moods of the young woman, the boy, Harris and "I" without making them

secondary or reflected in the mood of the narrator. In fact the narrator becomes simply the reader and for the moment makes the story his own.

In Browning's *My Last Duchess,* we have a different situation. Here the audience is concerned with the present tense situation and in the narrator as one immediately concerned in the scene. The selection is a Reading Monologue, *not* a Narrative Reading in the first person. The person speaking is the *duke* at all times, and the audience is interested in the duke as he explains to the messenger the significance of the lady's smile in the painting of the duchess. When the duke says, "Perhaps Fra Pandolf chanced to say, 'My lady's mantle,' etc.," he merely quotes the words of the artist; he is not free to assume formally the artist's mood. The audience sees the duke and the messenger and the painting on the wall. It does not picture Fra Pandolf in the scene. The selection could not as well have been written in the third person for here the mood of the speaker telling a tale to a supposed listener is more important than the incidents of the tale itself.

CHAPTER XI

THE VARIED TREATMENT OF TYPES

Selections for Either Impersonative or Pure Reading.—In classifying selections under their proper divisions according to the type of presentation required, it is natural that we shall find some kinds which apparently may be presented as effectively through one form as another. These are selections in which it seems doubtful whether the author's purpose was to exploit literal action, or characterization, or mood alone. Rarely is there any doubt concerning the purpose for literal action, for the author usually suggests parenthetically the action intended, so we may safely eliminate personating from this problem and consider only how to determine whether these doubtful selections shall be given through impersonative reading or pure reading. Of course, it is understood that when the author's purpose is perfectly clear we shall not hesitate to classify according to that purpose, but occasionally there are other elements which may govern the choice of delivery, especially in that large class of narrative literature which was not originally intended for public reading and in which the need for characterization rather than mood expression was not particularly considered at the time of writing. When, therefore, the author's purpose is

not clear, *the occasion, the audience conditions or the reader's own mood at the time of the reading* may determine his choice of presentation. Let us imagine, for example, an informal occasion; the audience a group of working men and women from the factories and mines; and the reader himself in a jovial mood arising from the informality of the occasion. The selection to be given is, let us say, *Old Chums,* by Alice Carey. Now in this selection either comedy characterization or mere expression of the old man's mood will be effective, but the tired factory men and women, unused to literary efforts, and loving informal rather than formal occasions, will undoubtedly enjoy more the comedy characterization through impersonative reading. If the same reading were to be offered in Boston at the University Club, the wise reader would choose pure reading as his method of presentation. The selection would be classified normally as a Character Monologue, but the audience condition might demand that it be elevated to the Reading Monologue class when given before the University Club.

Selections Unmistakable in Classification.—There are certain selections which must be given but one presentation because any other way would defeat their purpose. Here the audience conditions can not be taken into consideration as to what delivery they may demand. If the audience is such that it would not care for simple personations, the wise reader will omit them rather than attempt giving them through pure reading. If, on the other hand, the audience

is too uninformed to understand Browning's *Blot on the Scutcheon,* it is better not to give it than to burlesque it through impersonative reading. In most cases, however, unless the selection is too difficult from a literary standpoint, it may be introduced in a varied program not overbalanced by too much classic material, and the pure reading will be appreciated by way of contrast.

If Marjory Benton Cooke's *At the Matinée* is to be given at all, it must be personated. No other presentation is adequate. It was written for literal action and without it the piece would be a failure. If the Literary Club before which the reader is to entertain is so conservative that it considers any kind of personating undignified, then *At the Matinée* should not be offered at the Literary Club.

The same thing may be said of impersonative reading. *Fin de Siecle* should either be read impersonatively, representing the eccentric dude or it should not be read at all. This type, however, will often be acceptable where the piece requiring literal action will not. Dickens' *Christmas Carol* requires eccentric characterization, and loses half its charm if read by merely expressing the moods. Dickens, of all English novelists, was a character delineator and his purpose was to picture eccentric types. He often read publicly and it is known that he presented the *Christmas Carol* through impersonative reading.

Longfellow's *King Robert of Sicily* should be given only through pure reading. There are no eccentric characters. The whole theme is dependent

on moods, and to impersonate any of the characters would sacrifice too much of the thought and feeling in the situation. Some readers are tempted to make the old sexton eccentric, but careful analysis will show that he is an unimportant character and should not be made at all conspicuous. Impersonative treatment would make him so, therefore, the line "Who is there?" should be spoken merely in the mood of fear, with no attempt at producing a cracked or trembling voice, or drawing in the lips to picture a toothless old man. The audience is not concerned with him except as he opens the door for King Robert, the chief person in the poem.

My Last Duchess must be given through pure reading. The duke is not eccentric. He is merely a jealous man, and his mood dominates the whole reading. To call attention to any external eccentricity of character, or to make the duke walk about and "put aside the curtain" literally would take the mind of the audience away from the all important conception of his mood.

Selections Impossible to Classify as Readings.—*(1.) The Burlesque.* There are certain selections which may belong to the regular classification, but when frankly overdone and overacted become *the Burlesque.* Any selection is capable of being burlesqued but there are a great many which can not be so misused without showing gross bad taste on the part of the performer. Some selections are written purposely to be burlesque; for instance, F. Anstey's version of *Burglar Bill* wherein a young elocutionist

is being taught to "render" the old poem by that name. All the laws of elocution are purposely violated in a frank attempt to ridicule the stage struck elocutionist. Here the reader is free to do as he likes, for he is supposed to make the situation as ridiculous as possible.

(2.) The Inconsistent Composition. Many selections, written for public reading by young authors who are ignorant of the principles of public presentation, are incapable of consistent delivery, for they are themselves confusing. There are a few so called "Acting" Monologues in which the author directs the reader to have a suit-case, a scarf, a telephone, a baby and a whole trunk full of stage properties in order to give a ten-minute selection which could be given just as well without the properties. The true reader, if he gives such a selection at all, will rearrange it to be consistent with the actual necessities of the case. *Our Folks,* by Ethel Lynn, is an example of an inconsistent composition form. It starts out in implied dialogue and continues until about half-way when suddenly the character whose replies have been assumed begins to talk. Then later the reader becomes himself long enough to give the explanatory line "Only the old camp raven croaks." The inconsistency of this selection is not serious for the theme is one that is not dependent upon characterization or eccentricity. The only weakness lies in the fact that the audience may be confused when the new character speaks, for they are introduced to the monologue form and naturally expect it to continue. *Our Folks*

is neither a complete Reading Monologue nor a Narrative Reading, so it is not possible to classify it.

(3.) Stunts, or Imitations. Selections which frankly exploit nature sounds and imitations may rightly be called "stunts." They should not be called readings. Fred Emerson Brooks' *Barnyard Melodies* was written to give opportunity for a versatile imitator to imitate the creatures of the farm, and in the hands of a skilled (not necessarily artistic) entertainer, the selection is very pleasing.

(4.) Ventriloquism. Ventriloquism is another entertaining stunt popular in vaudeville, but not at all advisable to incorporate in a reading. It involves too much mechanical effort to allow its user the freedom of real suggestion. Ventriloquism is to the ear what legerdemain is to the eye—deceit. The ventriloquist by calling attention to a certain part of the platform, behind, outside the wings or at the side, induces the audience to imagine the voice to come from whatever direction has been indicated. The audience is conscious of the trick and is occupied in wondering how it is done rather than in thinking about what is said. Ventriloquism is a matter of skill, not of art, and consists in speaking back in the throat at various pitches and degrees of force to correspond with the effect which various distances in speech have upon the ear. This mechanical accomplishment, assisted by judgment and tact in persuading the audience to listen for sound coming from different directions and distances, is the whole secret of ventriloquism. Correspondingly, the secret of legerdemain lies in the

ability to draw the *visual* attention to any given point while skilfully palming articles made to appear and disappear. The inadvisability of using ventriloquism in reading is illustrated in the case of the young woman who read *Romeo and Juliet.* When giving the call of the old nurse, supposedly out of sight in Juliet's chamber, the reader placed her voice in the back of her throat and called "Juliet," trying at the same moment to keep the facial expression of Juliet beatific. The strain on her throat proved too much for her facial control, and Juliet at that moment looked more like a certain famous motion picture star when registering the surprise caused by an unexpected blow on the head. If the reader had been a skilful ventriloquist, she might have avoided the blank expression, but in any event she could not have avoided the abrupt change of attention on the part of the audience.

The use of "sleight of hand" in a reading is illustrated by the work of a prominent reader who introduces a large silk handkerchief in the conversation between Othello and Iago. It represents the handkerchief that Othello has given to Desdemona and which Iago now shows to Othello. At the moment when Iago gives back the handkerchief to Othello, the reader in using the real handkerchief is obliged to transfer it from himself to himself and then get it out of sight when Iago speaks again. To do this the reader becomes "magician" and makes several quick moves which causes the audience to wonder "how that handkerchief disappeared," a thought which

should never occur to a reader's audience. In the first place no handkerchief is necessary. The reader does not even need to suggest the action for the lines themselves are enough. In the second place, the "sleight of hand" movements take the attention of the audience entirely away from the scene.

In a comedy "stunt" like *Simonson's Baby*, in which the principal entertaining feature is the imitation of the crying baby held in the arms of an irate father, the ventriloquism adds comedy which does not injure the purpose of the selection, for the purpose is frankly ridiculous.

When done frankly for the amusement and curiosity of an audience, ventriloquism is permissible, but introduced in presenting a piece of literature worthy to be accepted for its literary value, it becomes another one of those little accidentals which not only take up time but turn the attention of the audience from the important things. Legerdemain makes a splendid novelty for entertainment, but when introduced to get rid of handkerchiefs, watches, or other unnecessary things often brought into a reading, it defeats the real purpose of the reader's art.

PART THREE

Method of Study

CHAPTER XII

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Introductory Statement.—Teachers of English and the practical forms of Public Speaking are sometimes inclined to minimize the importance of dramatic work and public reading. Many, indeed, ridicule the teaching of acting as a subject unworthy of receiving college credit. They do not realize that genuine dramatic culture is in reality as essential for ultimate success in public reading as the study of mathematics is necessary for success in engineering; that success in practical public speaking depends upon a knowledge of people; and that the best knowledge of people can come only through a study of moods, dispositions, and the various means of expressing thought and feeling through voice and action. It is difficult to make the young teacher of public speaking see that something more than intellect is necessary in reading aloud a piece of literature so that it will awaken the imagination of an audience to a full conception of its value. He is surprised that some of his brightest students can fail so utterly in presenting publicly literature that he knows they thoroughly understand. They have interpreted the meaning exactly and yet the audience was not moved. In his college course in "Methods," the young teacher had been taught to see

that his students "get the thought, hold the thought, and give the thought," but when these same students read for public entertainment, someway he finds that getting, giving and holding the *thought* is not enough. This is the very point. *The THOUGHT is not enough!* It is not even the first essential in preparing the student for adequate *public* reading.* *Thought* is not the beginning of wisdom; it is the *result* of wisdom. It is the constantly growing result of years of sensory experience and expanding emotional impressions; it is not the *foundation* of these experiences.

The purpose of the following chapters is to show that the highest type of suggestive and imaginative presentation, namely, *pure reading,* can be attained only through the natural and logical development of the student, *first,* in acting; *second,* in personating; *third,* in impersonative reading; and *last,* in pure reading. This logical development corresponds to the natural development of human expression through physical, emotional and finally intellectual activity.

In taking up this plan of study, we are assuming that the student is at least fifteen years of age and has had the regular physical and mental development corresponding to his years; that he has already reached the reasoning period and can "get the thought, hold the thought, and give the thought" of the printed

*This statement does not, of course, apply to the student of common reading from the page. This chapter is dealing solely with the professional student of *public* reading who has already passed the stage of intelligent reading from the page, and is at the point of beginning his preparation for a public career.

page; and that this development, of course, has been without *conscious* thought of the process on the part of the student. In order to develop *consciously* in the art of suggestion, the student must consciously go back to the beginnings of his experiences and *re-live* them—this time governed by conscious reasoning while *registering* their mental imagery. It is easier to teach a child to act than to teach a grown person, but it is impossible to teach a child to understand the art of suggestion. People marvel at the naturalness of the acting done by little children in the movies and on the stage and wonder how it was possible to teach them. They think, of course, that these children are prodigies. In reality they are just normal, healthy children giving expression to a natural instinct, namely to imitate "grown-ups." They have not reached the self-conscious age where the intellect suppresses the instinct because others are watching. If a child is allowed to increase his motor imagery and expand his power of imitation, he may pass the stage of self-consciousness without serious loss, but often the parents are so proud of their offspring's "talent" that they keep urging him to perform until he becomes conscious of his effort and either begins to overdo or else gets self-conscious and suppresses his instincts. Later, when he enters the public school, he begins the systematic mental development which overtops his acting instincts so that by the time he reaches high school, they are completely subjected and often forgotten.

If in high school the student is having the proper

training in common reading, he is learning to understand the thought of the printed page, to hold the thought in mind, and to express the thought orally to the class. He is also learning to express emotion vocally, perhaps, but he does *not* have training in bodily expression, or action.

We shall first review the natural order of human development in unconscious expression from birth to adolescence, and then show how the cultivation of *conscious* expression follows the same natural order in progressing from realistic imitation to the fine art of suggestion.

The Development of Human Expression.—At birth the child is a mere bundle of physical impulses and desires. There is no thought until it is evolved from physical activity and continued response to sensations. As Mark Twain says, "When baby smiles in her sleep, she is not dreaming of angels—it is only wind on the stomach." According to Messrs. Fulton and Trueblood in *Practical Elocution* the first mental development of the child is merely *sentient,* or the unconscious recording of impressions from the physical senses. The first emotional development is *sensitiveness,* and the child cries but is not conscious of its cry. Then follows a balance of mental and emotional development: On the emotional side the child becomes in successive stages, affectional-passional, self-preservative, social, moral and finally spiritual; mentally he becomes instinctive, perceptive, memorative, imaginative, and at last a reasoning being. It is not until he has reached the reasoning stage that he can

be said to possess *thought.* Until some time after reason appears all action and vocal utterance are instinctive or imitative in response to mental imagery, and development up to this point is unconscious. When reason manifests itself, it gradually becomes a basis for self-culture, or *conscious* development; it begins to record consciously physical and emotional experiences. As soon as the mind is able to take conscious thought of expression, it should be allowed to follow from the beginning the laws of development and thus make *conscious* expression *natural.*

The first attention should be given to the body in physical culture and voice training. If the early grammar school training in common reading has been neglected (and in most cases, it has) the student should next be given a thorough course wherein the principles of grouping, group sequence, group motive, central idea, denotation and connotation are put in practice. At the end of this course, the student is ready to begin his intensive training for the stage, or the platform, or for practical public speaking in legal, political or business life. A good course in original speech making should be offered parallel to dramatic work in order that the student may acquire a freedom and confidence in his own power of spontaneous expression. So many actors and public readers are slaves to memorized lines and are utterly lost before an audience if the memory fails. Training in extempore and impromptu speech makes the speaker independent, not only in cases where the memory fails but in conversation and on occasions when spontaneous speech is called for.

In all the subsequent discussion, it is assumed that all preliminary work has been done and the student is ready for his professional training.

The Development of the Art of Pure Reading.— Just as the child develops from a physical being through regular stages to a reasoning individual, so the beginner in *conscious* expression develops from literal acting (physical expression) to suggestion (imaginative thought and emotion plus reason) in pure reading. As there can be no thought before there has been bodily sensations and emotions, so there can be no suggestion until there has been an experience, directly or indirectly, of the thing to be suggested. It is upon this principle that the student is to build his power of suggesting scenes, events, moods and actions to his audiences.

Acting is considered the first step in this development because it requires imitation of complete movements and realistic representation of essential things. It is the easiest and most natural form of public expression and it makes use of the same instincts that govern the early acts of childhood. The student handles actual articles of furniture and real objects, and he converses with real people just as in life. Being with others on the stage, he is less conscious of himself for he realizes that the attention of the audience is not centered wholly upon him. He acts as he has seen others act under similar circumstances or he imitates the director. In any event his work is mostly imitative. He is as a child. He is dressed up and plays he is some one else doing something he

has seen some one else do. He is *unlike* a child in that his reason helps him store up the muscular and vocal impressions for use in subsequent conscious expression. His complete movements and bodily gestures give him the experiences which his imagery and reason will later translate into suggestive movements and gestures.

Personating is the second step toward the purely suggestive art for it introduces one element of imagination through suggestion and correspondingly eliminates the realistic element of *environment,* or costume, stage furniture, scenery, etc. Having become accustomed to the real surroundings and the handling of real objects while in dialogue, the student finds it easy, in personating, to imagine the surroundings and to pantomime the handling of objects so that the audience may easily imagine their presence. The action is still complete, (or *literal,* as we term it) but it is in relation to imaginary instead of to real objects. The student has advanced a step toward the art of suggestion but his work is still largely realistic.

When the student has advanced to *Impersonative Reading,* he has taken a long step toward suggestion which leaves realism far in the background. Not only is environment eliminated, but literal action is abandoned and the audience imagines the scene entirely apart from the reader himself. The only realistic effect retained at all is the vocal and facial characterization of eccentric or comedy characters. All other action has become suggestive. The only excuse for keeping literalness in voice and facial expression

lies in the fact that broad comedy and eccentricity are much more difficult to imagine than ordinary human moods, and an audience deprived of this realistic appeal would lose half the conception of the eccentricities. Human characteristics that are eccentric are, of course, comparatively infrequent and the average audience is not intimately acquainted with them. When reproduced literally in voice and feature, the eccentricity is at once understood and the imagination of the audience left free to accept the larger suggestions of environment and action.

In *Pure Reading* the student reaches his highest pinnacle of artistic achievement. Having accustomed his motor imagery to respond in literal imitation of complete movements, and his auditory memory to respond in imitation of different vocal characteristics, he is now ready to depend upon an acquired instinct to *suggest* action and to respond in involuntary vocal change to the changing moods. The experience in complete action and literal characterization in acting and personating has accustomed the student to the *feel* of different points of view. His motor memory instantly recalls the sensation of the former complete movements and he is now better able to choose general essentials from the mass of details for suggestive presentation than if he had attempted suggestion before having the literal experiences.

The Law of Suggestive Action.—The suggestion of a movement may be made in either of two ways: by halting the motion midway between the initial impulse and the accent of the completed movement, or

by making the accent upon the initial motion itself. In long, stately, sweeping gestures, the suggestion would require the accent to come a little later than the initial motion, while in ordinary gestures, the mere accenting of the initial impulse will be enough. Sometimes, for example, the slightest lifting of the hand and the sudden spreading of the fingers will suggest the complete action of leaping or running, as in *King Robert of Sicily* when the old sexton had opened the great church door, and

> . . . "a man rushed by him at a single stride
> Haggard, half naked, without hat or cloak
> Who, neither turned or looked at him or spoke,
> But leaped into the blackness of the night
> And vanished like a specter from his sight"

the sympathetic reader will follow with bodily attitude and suggestive gesture the rushing king and as he says "leaped," his fingers will unconsciously spread as the accent becomes necessary. It will be seen that such suggestive motions are impossible to work out except through actual conscious experience in the complete movements. One who has not thus developed his kinesthetic imagery can never hope to give reliable suggestion to his work. There can, of course, be first-hand imitation of an instructor in suggestive gesture, but to an observing eye such gestures always lack significance and are either over graceful and "studied," or are awkward and inadequate. When motor imagery is awakened and the memory of a muscular impulse is aroused, the reader has for an

instant the intention of reproducing the complete movement. As the intention is formed the gesture begins, but the *will* halts it and allows the voice and the descriptive material to complete the movement solely in the imagination of the hearers. The development of more imagery not only makes possible imitative action of the body as a whole, but assisted by a corresponding development of auditory imagery, makes possible vocal imitation. Hearing a sound the imitator translates into motor imagery of the vocal chords and of the muscles controlling the various resonant chambers, an adjustment which reproduces the sound. *Suggestive* action, therefore, depends upon a thorough understanding and practice of *literal* action.

The Law of Vocal Changes.—Involuntary, or unconscious vocal change comes from the natural expression of moods in daily life and form the unconscious imitation in childhood of different sounds. Later, as soon as the student has learned to overcome shyness and self-consciousness before an audience, he will publicly express moods in vocal change as unconsciously as in childhood. No attention to the mechanics of these changes is necessary until after the student has had considerable experience in the involuntary changes of voice. Voluntary changes grow out of imitation and the knowledge of speech mechanics. When both auditory and motor imagery are well developed, imitation of sounds is comparatively easy. In acting the student has developed his motor imagery to such a degree that he finds it easy to assume the gait, gesture and facial

expression of the character he represents. Gradually he will grow so used to assuming the character's action that it becomes almost a second nature for him to acquire the peculiar tone quality of age or of any eccentric character. A knowledge of speech mechanics will aid in imitating the dialect, provincial speech, speech defects and other peculiarities. The best time for practice in voluntary vocal change is in impersonative reading where eccentric characterization is the primary essential. Here the student has opportunity for conscious imitation of vocal peculiarities. Underlying all voluntary changes are always the involuntary changes due to shifting moods and varying motives of thought, so at no time in presentation can an actor or reader be without involuntary changes.

CHAPTER XIII

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

In the Play with Others.—At the very beginning of public work the student is sure to be nervous and painfully self-conscious. It is for that reason he should be given something to do which will enable him to forget himself as much as possible and will give him assurance that the audience is not continually watching him. Putting him in the play with his classmates and letting him keep busy with little, natural actions while carrying on a normal dialogue is the best possible way to get him accustomed to an audience. Here he is surrounded by the scene, actual properties, furniture, etc., and must put his whole attention to details of action with the properties, etc. He does not look at the audience, in fact he is told to ignore it utterly. He is to talk and act as if ignorant of the existence of an audience and thus half the cause for fear is taken away, for the looking at an audience and being always obliged to face it are two most disconcerting factors in appearing before the public. The actor may at times turn his back completely on the audience and while others are occupying the attention, he rests assured that he is not being criticized. Gradually all nervousness wears away and he does not mind being alone on the stage

in a soliloquy. It is not wise to give an eccentric character part to the timid student. Normal characters in simple comedy afford the best material for the first work in acting. No dialects should be attempted for the student is not yet accustomed to relying on his motive and auditory imagery to such a degree that he will make a good imitation and reproduce the mood and atmosphere peculiar to the dialect. The student should first be taught to handle himself well on the stage. Then he may be put in a sketch where he is taught to handle others—to assist to a chair, to lift another person, to carry one, to embrace, to struggle (in wrestling or fighting) to fence, box, etc. In the play with others the student gains experience in all the technique of bearing, including poise and carriage. Every set of muscles is brought into play, and the kinesthetic sense developed to a marvelous degree. He learns how to handle a sword, a rifle, a newspaper, a letter; how to conduct himself at a table; how to do a thousand little things concerning which in actual life he might never take conscious thought for personal improvement. Here in the play he is made to observe closely the right and the wrong way of doing things. All this training can not fail to affect his bearing favorably so that when he begins to appear alone before audiences and the attention is centered at all times upon him, he will have confidence in himself and will not be subjected to the criticism that most readers bring upon themselves.

Acting in the play with others, then, is the first step in training for public appearance whether upon the stage or upon the platform.

In the Soliloquy Alone.—Acting in the Soliloquy offers the first opportunity for the student to be alone on the stage and the center of uninterrupted attention on the part of the audience. He is still among realistic surroundings and is busy with minute action, but he has taken a short step toward suggestion in that his bearing must be tempered by a certain abstractness which is apparent when one is meditating. He must suggest meditation while in reality he is speaking aloud for the benefit of the audience. His moods are expressed with less reserve while in meditation than while conversing with others. All his action may be the same as it would be in the scene with others, but instead of completely ignoring his audience, he talks not to them but as though they were a part of his own mind conversing with itself. His eyes do not look at any one in the audience but stray absently out over the audience or are fixed unseeing on various objects in the scene. The constant attention of the audience helps bring the student into closer harmony with them, and, since in the play he has already overcome his nervousness, this new relationship to the audience does not disturb him in the least. The Soliloquy which is to be acted may be an excerpt from a play, or a soliloquy written expressly as a complete selection to be acted. It should be a normal character who speaks. Dialect or provincial speech should not yet be attempted. One of the best Acting Soliloquies for the student to take up at this time is Leland T. Powers' *Pro and Con.* Here there is opportunity for splendid expression of various moods while gazing

abstractedly out into the audience—the young man's action with the gloves and the letter being seemingly unconscious.

After the Acting Soliloquy, the student is ready to drop the realistic surroundings and leave them to the imagination of his audience, while he is concerned with action during meditation.

The Soliloquy for Personating.—In taking up the work of personating, the student has stepped from the realm of the actor to that of the reader. Wherever he may entertain, special surroundings and stage accessories are unnecessary. The soliloquy which requires plenty of action but no properties or scene may be considered the "common ground" between the actor and the reader as far as the action itself is concerned. Great attention is paid to every accompanying mood (although the reader, of course, must not appear conscious of his movements) while meditating. The bearing of the reader in personating is the same as that of the actor, except that the reader will never allow himself to recline or turn his back completely on the audience. In pantomime, every motion is literal and his objective gesture must be accurate. When imaginary objects are handled the fingers and hands must correspond to the shape of the object, as for instance, in picking up an imaginary lighted candle, the speaker must see exactly the kind of candlestick he is holding and must know how his fingers would close around it. If it is the old-fashioned kind with a little ring-like handle, his fingers will hold a different position and his eyes will look for the

flame at a different point above his hand. The only sure way of determining the correct position is to hold a real lighted candle for a moment and practise observing the position and the *feel* of the candlestick in the fingers. Then after removing the candle the fingers should take the same position while the eyes focus at the point where the real flame was. The real candle in practice a few times will correct errors in pantomime due to imperfect kinesthetic and visual memory. In the final delivery of a personated soliloquy, the *exact* pantomime, of course, is not absolutely essential, but for practice and the development of the kinesthetic sense, the student should endeavor to be exact. Another matter which must be kept in mind is the returning of the imagined object to its resting place before taking up another object. Since literal action means *completed* action, and since action must be complete in order to be realistic rather than suggestive, it is necessary to carry out every objective gesture to its close. If the candle is to be carried across the platform and deposited on an imaginary stand before a mirror while the speaker combs her hair in pantomime, the movement of picking up the brush and comb should not be made until the candle has been put down. If the student has properly visualized the candle and feels it in her hand she will not forget, but if her action is mechanical she is liable to drop the candle in mid air in order to scratch her nose and then—presto!—the candle is back in her hand again. When she reaches her imaginary mirror, she picks up the comb and the candle is again forgot-

ten. The teacher must watch carefully these apparently trivial details and help the student to keep consistent.

By the time the student has had systematic training in acting, both in the play and in the soliloquy, his kinesthetic imagery has developed so that it will begin to transfer auditory as well as visual impressions into a conscious imitative adjustment of the vocal cords and it is now comparatively easy to imitate an eccentric voice quality or the variations of pitch, force and time. He should not, however, depart just yet from the portrayal of *normal* characters in action.

The Monologue for Personating.—What has been said regarding the study of the soliloquy for personating applies the same way as far as the literal pantomime is concerned. There is in the monologue, however, an added appeal to the imagination in that the audience is required to imagine other characters in the scene. The subjective action of the reader here reflects the presence of the others, and his conversation has definite direction instead of the abstraction in meditation. The eyes travel frequently to the spot where the other participants in the conversation are supposed to be. The pauses are accompanied by a listening attitude and a corresponding facial expression showing response to the thought of the supposed speaker. The walking about is arranged so that the audience can see the reader's face at all times and every action is literally carried out except reclining. The other characters may be imagined to walk about through the simple trick on the part of the reader

who follows with his eyes the supposed movements of the imaginary characters. The monologue is distinctly an advance toward suggestive art although its action is still realistic. The practice of the student at this point should enable him to attempt eccentricities of character in voluntary vocal change of quality, force, pitch and time, but he should not yet try defective speech, provincial speech or dialect.

Eccentric Address for Personating.—In the Eccentric Address, the student for the first time directly addresses his audience, not in his own person but in the character he represents. He assumes his real audience to be a part of the scene and himself to be an eccentric person whose style of oratory is ridiculous and overdone. The student feeling himself in comedy character free to overdo or to burlesque speaking, is not afraid of criticism and therefore can face the audience without self-consciousness. In the preceding steps the student has been gradually getting used to an audience and now, especially since he is not in serious mood, he will not feel embarrassment at directly addressing his audience. He will literally assume the character of an orator and will walk about, shout, wave his arms and overdo the delivery in whatever way the selection suggests. There may be no occasion for more than vocal and facial characterization, but since the circumstances of comedy oratory do not limit the action of the speaker, this type of selection is classed for the art of personating rather than for impersonative reading. There is very little opportunity for literal objective pantomime, but

facial expression together with indicative and subjective gesture as well as the bearing of the speaker may be literal. By this time the student is quite ready to assume voluntary peculiarities of speech and even dialects. This type of selection is not good for the student who is naturally prone to overdo his action, but it is excellent practice for the individual who is concentric and rather negative in disposition.

The Character Series for Personating.—The Character Series has been called the "common ground" for treatment by personating or impersonative reading because it may exploit eccentric characters in literal action throughout, or it may be confined to literalness in voice and facial expression only. Its value in the sequence of study lies first in the practice of a variety of eccentric characterizations embodied in one selection, and second, in the now serious moments of the direct address to the audience. The teacher must make clear that the Character Series is not a reading in which characters *converse* with one another, but is merely a number of uninterrupted speeches or stories told formally or informally by several eccentric speakers to a supposed audience of two or more. The descriptive matter between speeches is given by the reader in his own person and to the real audience. *This is the first time during his sequence of study that the student becomes HIMSELF during the rendition of a selection and talks directly to his audience.* It is also the first time he assumes directly more than one character within a selection. There is here no need for sudden change from one character to another, for

it is not conversation. The stories or speeches are not important in themselves. It was the author's intention to have a series of peculiar characters portrayed and what they say is incidental. Here the student gains facility in becoming completely in voice as well as in action several different comedy characters in succession. The fact that he is not required to make sudden changes back and forth enables him to go completely into the bodily action if he so desires. If the student is inclined to overdo his action, the teacher should require him to present this type of selection through impersonative reading. If he still needs practice in literal action, he should be required to walk about and do all that is needed for personating.

The Character Soliloquy and the Character Monologue for Impersonative Reading.—In this step the reader strives to perfect single characterizations in voice and facial expressions, paying no attention whatever to other literal action. Great attention is paid to the voluntary assumption of a vocal peculiarity and a corresponding peculiarity in facial expression involving fixed features or recurring mannerism. The Character Soliloquy applies the meditative mood to an eccentric character, and the Character Monologue directs the attention to a supposed listener, but the listener instead of being imagined with him upon the platform is indicated in front and a little to one side. The effect upon the audience is to picture the whole situation apart from the real platform and among any surroundings conceived at will by the imagination of the audience. Here is an opportunity for further

practice in dialect and provincial characterizations in order to perfect the student's conception of atmosphere and his adaptability to the peculiarities of speech mechanics. By the time he has worked out several characterizations painstakingly, the student is ready to take the next step toward suggestiveness in reading.

The Character Play for Impersonative Reading.— The teacher in asking the student to prepare a scene from a Character Play should first see that the stage directions are properly arranged in descriptive form so that the pure dialogue of the play becomes like the descriptive dialogue of a narrative except that it is all kept in the present tense. The descriptive passages are given to the audience in direct address, and the conversations require abrupt change from character to character. All action except facial expression is suggestive and carriage is not considered, for the reader stands quietly in the center of the platform, never taking more than one step in any direction. Since it has become easy for the student to make voluntary changes in voice, and to assume feature characterizations, he is now called upon to make these changes suddenly and as suddenly return to his own person in direct address and description. He is thoroughly accustomed to his audience now and is never self-conscious. He can drop a character instantly and talk conversationally to his audience, or he can suggest pictures and scenes by a mere suggestive movement of the hand accompanying a word of description. His art has become highly suggestive.

The Character Narrative for Impersonative Reading.—The Character Narrative offers a little more opportunity for pure narration and description interspersed among the conversations, and the student is more frequently himself before his audience than in the Character Play. The Narration is written in the past tense, so the reader is more in the position of story-teller than in direct address as in the play. All that has been said relative to the presentation, however, applies the same in the Character Narrative as in the Character Play. The chief characters are eccentric and require more realistic attention than normal characters, but even those when supposed to carry on action are only represented in suggestive action. The reader must remember that he can not walk about or use a chair in any kind of selection that requires sudden transition from character to character or to description. When the reader drops into a descriptive passage he should look directly at his audience from time to time and picture his scene not with him upon the platform, but *out beyond the audience and back of it.* The audience then sees the entire scene imaginatively and undisturbed by any limitations of the platform itself.

Interpretative Readings Including Sub-forms for Pure Reading.—When the student enters upon pure reading he abandons all effort at realism and becomes wholly suggestive in mood and description. His vocal changes are involuntary and are the result of change in mood. Characters in conversation are distinguished either by their characteristic mood, or by mere ex-

planation on the part of the reader. No attempt at literal characterization is made at any point. The student should study the best literature in the order of the Reading Soliloquy, The Reading Monologue, The Reading Play, The Descriptive Reading, The Narrative Reading, and The Lyric Reading. The Declamation, or serious speech, may be given as an Interpretative Reading with a good deal of profit to the student, especially if he wishes to develop practical public speaking. Study of the declamation first, however, before he has had dramatic training or at least training in extempore oratory, often makes the student stiff and mechanical. Declamation on the whole is not practical, but may become worth while if taken up after a thorough course leading to Pure Reading.

After the student has had systematic practice in selections in the order just explained, he is ready to present any kind of literature in a creditable manner for public approval.

How to Work Out any Selection for Public Presentation.—From the foregoing explanation of the way in which suggestive action develops from literal action, it follows that any selection to be given suggestively through pure reading can be rehearsed realistically with great profit to the reader. All the suggestive action can be made more surely suggestive to the imaginations of the audience, if the reader has freshened his kinesthetic imagery by realistic and complete action in practice. In preparing Thomas Bailey Aldrich's *In an Atelier* the reader will do well

to pantomime carefully and literally all the movements of the painter, as he paints, scrutinizes his model, measures distances, and mixes colors. He should visualize the canvas on the easel, the palette with its different colors, the brushes, and the girl in her queen's costume sitting as his model. In carrying on the implied dialogue he glances from time to time to her and back to his work. Later he gradually loses interest in the work and centers his attention upon the girl. At last he puts his brushes away and devotes his whole attention to her. Going over the selection a few times as a personated monologue, making action the most important feature, gives the student the exact atmosphere of the situation and enables him to feel in his muscles the little movements that realistically accompany his lines. Later he will put more attention to the mood and will merely show the various impulses of movement which will be manifest in the initial motions and accents suggestive of the whole situation. The selection is readily classified as a reading monologue, with mood alone essential so that in presenting the selection publicly the reader knows it requires only suggestive action and involuntary vocal changes.

There are many selections obviously suitable for pure reading only, but they need practice in literal action in order that the resulting suggestive action may be more powerful. Sometimes it is even wise to go back to *acting* in order to get the situation and atmosphere more thoroughly in mind. In presenting *The Soul of the Violin,* it is often necessary in prac-

tice to have the student handle a real violin a few times in order that his body may realize the *feel* of it and the different impulses for movement that are to be suggested. Of course, for public presentation the selection should not be personated, for it is a Narrative Reading, demanding only the expression of a wonderful mood which can be powerfully suggested, if the reader has tried to practise realistically the action of the old man in the situation.

In preparing monologues for personating, it is frequently necessary to use the actual properties for a time in order to get the objective pantomime consistent with the form of the objects to be suggested. In order that the student may pantomime reading a letter and turning a page, he may first use a real letter and note carefully just what he does with his hands and where his eyes focus. Later the pantomime will be so literal that the audience will easily imagine the presence of the letter.

CHAPTER XIV

CHOICE OF SELECTION

The Student's Difficulty.—One of the great trials in the course of study is the finding of selections suitable for public presentation. The teacher who makes a practice of picking out the selections for his pupils, is depriving the student of a valuable bit of training, and is at the same time unnecessarily burdening himself. The student should be taught to select his own material right from the beginning. It is a mistake for him to start out depending upon his teacher and it is a bigger mistake for the teacher to encourage this dependence. The teacher should stand ready to suggest and give general instructions as to what type of selections will be best at different stages in the student's development; he should see to it that all selections chosen are not beyond the student's grasp, and are in good taste, for good taste is a quality often lacking in the average beginner; he should be ready to assist in abridging, or cutting selections to be given, but he should make the student do most of the work himself; and finally he should insist that the student take time and care in making his choice. So many students get discouraged after reading half an hour in the library and so take up the selection that looks as if it "might do." Then after working on a selec-

tion, more often than not they become tired of it and wish they had selected something else. A great deal of time is wasted in working out selections that were chosen hastily. The teacher should impress upon his pupils the importance of hard study in *choosing* pieces—to say nothing of the work of memorizing and preparation for delivery. It is safe to say that at least one-third of the time to be put on preparation should be devoted to looking over material for choice. "What kind of piece do I want?" is the query that overshadows the enthusiasm of the beginner when he is told to go to the library and select the first piece that is to be prepared for a public recital. If the teacher has already suggested a number of sources, the student after a hasty search is likely to return discouraged and report that everything he read was too old or else something he didn't like. Won't the teacher please tell him something to learn, and he'll learn it whether he likes it or not! Here is where the teacher must remain firm. Good counsel may be given on how to search out material and advice concerning new and old selections offered, but he should not yield to the entreaty and allow the student to shift such an important responsibility. A splendid incentive toward diligent search for suitable material is the prospect of a public recital. If the student is advised to choose his selections with a view to making up an evening's program, he will have a definite purpose which will aid him in determining the different types he will need for variety and balance. He will unconsciously bear in mind an audience and as

he is searching he will choose what he thinks will entertain it. He will visualize the selection as he sees in imagination its effect on his hearers.

New Selections or Old.—Many students are afraid to chose anything that has been given before, and they waste hours and hours of time in looking for something they have never heard given. While it is commendable to be always on the lookout for new material, yet the old should not be entirely neglected. An old piece of literature may give continued enjoyment to an audience, just as an old piece of music may be given over and over again with increasing delight. The wedding march from *Lohengrin,* or from Mendelssohn's *Mid-Summer Night's Dream* will never grow old, and when played by an artist is always enjoyed. Why should not good literature be given over and over again? The teacher should impress upon the student the value of some of the old readings. It is true that there are thousands of selections which are no longer entertaining because they have been overworked, but a piece of real literature can never lose its power when presented by a master.

The entertainer must not, of course, rely wholly on old literature, even if it is classic. He must be on the watch for new material to present with the old. Publishers of *Choice Selections, Best Readings, Speakers,* etc., are constantly adding to their volumes, but of course the student must not rely wholly upon these works. He should learn to make his own cuttings and read constantly with a view to adaptation for reading.

Where to Find New Material.—One of the indispensable books for the school library is Granger's *Guide to Recitation and Poetry,* published by A. C. McClurg & Company. This book gives the title of all popular readings, monologue, etc., that have been published for public presentation up to a very recent date and also gives the sources for finding the selections.

In searching for new material, the student can do no better than keep up a regular acquaintance with the best magazines and story periodicals, for in these lie gold mines of unadapted material needing only the sifting and washing process to prepare it for the eager market. The student must learn to recognize suitable selections and to know how to abridge and adapt them for the platform. Not only are the current magazines a fruitful field for research, but modern books and plays offer chapters and scenes that may be quite as entertaining as the short story.

How to Recognize Good Material for Adaptation.—The task of finding new and original material for public reading would seem unjustly burdensome if it were necessary for the student to read thoroughly everything he sees in order to determine its fitness. An immense amount of material may be glanced over, but only that which passes the first test of hasty inspection should be laid aside for careful reading. There may be three stages of inspection which will aid the student in narrowing down his material. The first stage is merely glancing through the pages of a magazine, reading the title and noticing whether there

seems to be plenty of conversation. If the page presents too many "solid" paragraphs, the article may be discarded at once, unless the student is looking for a descriptive reading. The page that is broken up into frequent conversations shows a point in favor of adaptation. If the title suggests animation, humor, uncertainty, similarity, antagonism, or affairs of life and death, the student will do well to apply the second test, namely, to read the first two paragraphs together with a paragraph in the middle and the concluding paragraph to see if the story holds interest and presents a suitable climax for a public reading. If this test succeeds, the selection should be read carefully from beginning to end, keeping in mind the necessity for consistency in maintaining the factors of interest. According to Mr. Arthur Phillips in *Effective Speaking* the factors of interest are: the vital, the unusual, the uncertain, the concrete, the similar, the antagonistic, and the animate. A story to be really entertaining must embody one or more of these factors: it must deal with matters of life and death; with unusual situations out of which grows the humorous selection; with events and situations whose outcome is uncertain—the mystery story; with a concrete rather than abstract, scientific, or philosophical subject; with experiences familiar to every one; with contending forces; or with rapid, invigorating motion. Stories that appeal to the reader at once as intensely gripping, with plenty of conversation and movement, or stories of deep sympathy and sentiment, afford much opportunity for adaptation for public reading. After the

student has applied his three tests and has read the selection once aloud to visualize the pictures and determine the effect the voice produces, at the same time imagining the effect it would have on an audience, he is ready to "cut," or abridge it for public use.

Cutting the Selection.—Much that is written primarily for silent reading may be omitted when given orally with the added expression of action and vocal change. Long descriptive passages may be reduced to a sentence, or rewritten in two or three crisp paragraphs. A great deal of the descriptive dialogue (the "he said," "said she, smiling" and the "answered Mary, as she put her hand over her heart," etc.), may be dispensed with, for the reader himself may suggest the action or the characters without making the description necessary. The teacher with his superior judgment and experience should assist the pupil in cutting all unnecessary parts of the story and such parts of the conversation as may be omitted without injuring the plot or the continuity of the theme. In a short time the student will be able to do his own cutting with very little suggestion from the teacher. He will soon comprehend the significance of certain passages of description compared to the triviality of others. He will seem to know intuitively where to retain the "he said" and "said she" and where it would be wise to omit them. Practice and observation will develop judgment and a critical standard in viewing one's own work, so that the pupil may soon become independent of the teacher. Self-reliance in choosing and cutting selections should be encouraged by the

teacher at the very beginning. A teacher who does not present principles on which a student may become his own critic is a mere "coach"—not a teacher.

Preparing the Selection for Delivery.—The selection having been chosen and arranged for public reading, the question of how to prepare it next arises. "Shall I give it from memory or shall I read it from the manuscript with a desk before me?" says the student. At this point there seems to be diversity of opinion. Some teachers never encourage memorizing and others insist upon it. Some hold the opinion that to present a reading from memory is to descend to the plane of vaudeville, and that reading from the page is the only dignified way of presenting literature. Others maintain that no reading from the page can be as powerful or as impressive as reading from memory; that the reading from the page detracts from the interest of the audience and gives the impression that the reader is too lazy to memorize. There seems to be no common ground for argument. In fact, it can be shown that there is a place for both ways of presenting literature and that either way can be made artistic. It is obvious that *acting* or *personating* can be given in no other way than from memory, but *impersonative reading* and *pure reading* (since no walking about nor literal action is required) may be given at the desk and with the manuscript. The greater part of literature suitable for a reader is of the type requiring either pure reading or impersonative reading, so the question of using the manuscript arises at the point where the student finds himself able to read

as suggestively and with apparently as powerful an effect with the book before him. He sees at once that he can have a much wider repertoire and that the suggestions he gives are not hindered by the presence of the book. Upon experiment he is told by his audiences that they were not even conscious of the book; that the story was as vivid as if it had been witnessed on the stage. This commendation of the artist's work may be perfectly sincere, but at the same time it may be misleading to the student of reading. To be able to read masterfully from the page to a public audience is an ideal worthy of great effort, but the student must not be in too much of a hurry to put it into practice. Artistic reading from the page is difficult of attainment and can not be accomplished with any degree of success until the student has had years of practice in memory presentation. To read publicly from the page requires the ability to take in at a glance whole paragraphs. It presupposes such a familiarity with the lines that they could almost be said to be memorized. The work of preparation is almost as exacting as if the selection *were* memorized, except that the emphasis is put on mood and characterization rather than on the mechanics of memory. The student puts the extra amount of time that would otherwise be occupied in the drudgery of memorizing in perfecting his characterizations and making vivid his atmospheres. When the reader has accomplished the art of reading publicly from the page, there is a distinct advantage in this mode of presentation. We shall conclude, therefore, that the teacher should in-

sist upon his pupils memorizing for public presentation until they have acquired the fine art of reading from the page.

"How to memorize" is the next question that arises in the preparation of a selection for public reading.

Professor J. S. Gaylord in an article published by the National Association of Speech Education has offered an admirable method of procedure which we shall not take the time to quote here. Assuming that the student has already been made acquainted with the principles, we shall merely add a statement or two which may be applied to any good method of memorizing. The teacher can not be too careful in cautioning the student against slip-shod memorizing or the old "conning by rote" method and mechanical line by line study. If the student has been properly trained in the principles of grouping, group sequence, group values, motives, etc., he will intuitively memorize the *ideas* rather than the words. His greatest trouble will be in memorizing the *transitions,* or associating the last line of one paragraph with the first line of the next. Here he will have to form deliberately some mental picture or association that recalls the new paragraph immediately upon speaking the last line of the preceding paragraph. Then, he must repeat the two lines several times as he visualizes his picture until they become inseparable. It is rarely within the body of a paragraph that the memory fails if it has been associating ideas rather than words.

The student should stand by desk and book and work over his selection aloud just as he hopes to give

it publicly after discarding the manuscript. He should have his body free for suggestive action which will gradually manifest itself as the moods become more and more a part of the reader. Besides gaining valuable practice in reading from the page he is memorizing more rapidly and surely, because he is forming more complete associations. To sit down and mumble over the lines of a selection is not only a slow way of memorizing but a harmful way, because it separates the lines from their attendant action and creates mental impressions that have to be changed when final preparation comes. Imagining an audience every time the selection is read over helps the student to visualize every situation and put his best effort into the interpretation. The selection should be read from beginning to end a number of times in order to get a complete idea of it as a unit. The single paragraph should not be committed until the entire selection is practically memorized. Then the student may take weak paragraphs—or those which seem more difficult to fix exactly in mind and work over them separately until the difficulty is overcome, but he should never learn a selection page by page or paragraph by paragraph.

The teacher should remind the student during his practice that he is not to visualize the scene or the characters on the platform with him, but should always see the scene and the characters with whom he converses in front of him and a little to one side. The reader will look at his audience in giving the descriptive parts, and when assuming characters he should

place them in his own imagination just a little to the right and left of an assumed straight line extending in front of him out through the center of his audience. He need never imagine more than two at a time, but he should always visualize the one *to whom* he is speaking, reserving his kinesthetic imagery and auditory imagery for the character he is assuming. When he shifts to the other characters he merely directs his attention slightly to the other side of the center line and visualizes the character who the instant before was speaking but who now is the listener. Care should be taken not to make the angle too wide. Just a slight turn from left to right and back to left is sufficient to suggest the opposition of two people in conversation. If the situation demands one person addressing at the same time two people, the speaker looks from right to left while *sustaining* the mood and attitude of the speaker. Then when another speaks, the change may be indicated by a change of mood and attitude or by a word of description. When there are more than three concerned in the conversation, the speaker in addressing them all visualizes them scattered about in front of him and on a level with him. Any two of them in rapid conversation will demand a slight turn from left to right, etc. Bits of description also aid in keeping the characters distinct. There should be no attempt in portraying normal characters, to distinguish by peculiarity of feature or action. Pure reading means to suggest.

All that has been said about preparing the selection pertains to both the character reading and the

interpretative reading. The method of learning a personation is necessarily different. Since action is more important here than the subject-matter, the reader, after the first few readings from beginning to end, may profitably work out his action paragraph by paragraph, learning the lines as he proceeds, at first with the manuscript in his hand, and later, as he develops detailed action, laying the book aside and referring to it as he needs. He must, however, work longer on the selection than is necessary on a reading after he has committed it perfectly in order to adjust all action with the lines and make easy transitions. In working over a personation, he should remember that the scene is imagined upon the platform with him, so in speaking to an assumed character he will turn so that the audience can imagine the other character standing there with him. In a reading (whether a character reading or an interpretative reading) the characters are not imagined on the platform at all.

CHAPTER XV

CHOICE OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

Introductory.—When the student has completed a thorough preliminary course and has acquired an understanding of the breadth of the field of expression, he will instinctively make a choice of profession according to the particular phase of the work to which he takes an especial liking. If he is practical rather than artistic, he will naturally wish to develop along the lines of original public speaking and will be inclined to thrust aside any suggestion of dramatic work, as unnecessary and sentimental. If he is artistic, his taste will point either to acting or to public reading and he in turn may be inclined to disparage the original public speaking as unnecessary to the accomplishment of his histrionic ambition. The teacher should make clear that any branch of the field is helpful to the development of the others. The most intensive study, of course, will finally be directed to the technique of the field one is to make his profession. The man who wishes to use his powers of expression in a practical way, as a lawyer, teacher, or salesman, can have no better preparation than a course in *acting* followed by one in public reading, taking them up in a more general way than his final course in public speaking which should be studied

intensively, placing emphasis on extempore oratory and debating. The artist, on the other hand, parallel with his intensive study of acting or reading, should take up a general course in extempore speech and debating.

Suggested Course for the Actor.—He who aspires to be an actor is permitted the great joy of plunging at once into his chosen work, but he will have the lesser joy later, of departing from it for a time in order to take up the work of the reader, and the arduous work of making speeches and debating. Because acting, as we have shown, comes logically before reading, it is taken up by the student first as a preparation for reading. Later he goes back to acting for his intensive and permanent study in more difficult rôles. His work in reading will have given him experience in suggestion and in creating subtle impressions upon the minds of his audience, so that when he goes back to his larger field of acting, his work will have a finish and culture rarely found in any except the most well-known Shakespearian or classical actors, and among those who have achieved world wide fame in our most literary modern plays. Along with his first work in acting the student should take a good course in the forms of public address and in argumentation and debating. These courses do more toward making him master of his audience than any other work he can take. Debating develops his logic and his judgment, it teaches him to think quickly and accurately while before an audience, and above all it builds for his interpretative work a common sense

foundation that lifts it into the realm of true art free from hyper-emotionalism and "barnstorming" sentimentality. The next step in the student's culture should be a study of personating, followed by impersonative reading, and later by pure reading. After broad rather than intensive study of the reader's field, the student who chooses acting as his profession will take up the more technical phases and work up rôles in serious drama and tragedy.

A brief summary of the sequence of courses leading to the actor's profession would be: Preliminary Courses, Acting (simple comedy and farce) together with Public Speaking and Argumentation; Personating and Impersonative Reading; Pure Reading and finally intensive study of acting in the serious Drama and Tragedy.

Suggested Course for the Reader.—The sequence of courses for the reader is the same as for the actor, but the intensive study begins with Impersonative Reading, and continues through Pure Reading, broadening and developing the larger suggestiveness and the ability to read artistically from the printed page for public entertainment. The Reader does not go back to an intensive study of acting, but devotes his finishing culture to Pure Reading.

Suggested Course for the Public Speaker.—Since the practical business man has little inclination for fine art, it may be difficult to persuade him to take up courses in Acting and Reading as a foundation for original public speech. He will want to plunge at once into declamation or some type of speech making

that shows promise of developing him along practical lines. He thinks that the preliminary courses in physical culture and speech mechanics are surely all that is necessary to launch him into his regular field. The tactful teacher will explain that a study of human nature is particularly essential to the practical business man and that no subject offers a better study of varying moods and their accompanying outward expression than dramatic art. He will show that practice in action and the literal assuming of different types will aid in recognizing the types when he meets them in business life. Of course the practical man is usually inartistic, so the teacher should not attempt to make an artist of him. He can only give the necessary opportunity for the student to get a general development in that direction so that it may be of use to him indirectly when he takes up extempore and impromptu speaking, argument and debate, salesmanship and promoting, in his intensive study. Dramatic work is helpful as a foundation for any profession for it teaches the student adaptability and gives him keener judgment of human nature. He can not take a course in acting without increasing his kinesthetic development and he can not work at reading for any length of time without developing a finer sense of values through his cultivation of suggestion. The teacher should therefore strongly urge the sequence of study suggested, for the development is based on sound psychology and experiment has shown reliable results.

A Word about the Preliminary Courses.—Before leaving the subject of suggested courses it may be well

to explain the nature of Preliminary Courses necessary as a foundation to any proper development along professional lines.

A good course in physical instruction including calesthenics and esthetic culture should coordinate with a course in speech mechanics and voice culture as the beginning of every student's work in oral expression.

Following this course the student should have daily drill in common reading from the printed page: he should learn the principles of grouping, group sequence, denotation, connotation, etc., so that his reading may be intelligent without being cold and mechanically precise.

A third course immediately preparatory to Acting and Reading may profitably consist in practice in common reading in such well known classics as *The Christmas Carol, Julius Cæsar* and *Enoch Arden* or *Evangeline.* At this point the student ought to be ready to start his public program work in the course of acting.

When the course in acting, personating, impersonative reading and pure reading is begun, the work of practical public speaking should be started and carried on parallel to the dramatic work, the extempore speaking and the practice in different types of original oral composition preceding the work in oral debate.

THE END

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Definition of Class Types.—It is assumed that the student is already familiar with the underlying principles of elocution including a knowledge of the vocal elements, quality, force, pitch and time, and the necessary fundamental laws of action, so the definitions as set forth in the Appendix may be accepted merely as an aid to a clearer understanding of the more technical classifications offered in the book.

(1.) The Artists Defined. THE ACTOR is trained to assume realistically during the entire time he is in view of the audience a single character in appropriate make-up and costume, surrounded by scenery representing the background, or setting of the play, and assisted by stage properties, furniture, lighting effects, and all the paraphernalia necessary to a realistic performance. He works with fellow actors also appropriately costumed. His art, *acting,* is the only art that allows more than one actual participant. He may be alone on the stage in soliloquy or he may be with any number who are engaged with him in dialogue and action. The actor always speaks his lines from memory.

THE READER is trained to assume more or less suggestively one or many characters during the time he is in view of his audience. His province is not the stage but the platform. He is not assisted by make-

up, costumes or stage effects but appears on the platform in conventional attire. The reader may speak his lines from memory or from a manuscript upon a desk before him.

(2.) The Arts Defined. ELOCUTION is the general term used to include all forms of public or private speech in which voice and action are employed.

ACTING refers to that type of art by which one or more persons in appropriate costumes and make-up and with special properties, stage furniture and scenery, present realistically a piece of dramatic literature.

READING is a general term representing the art by which one person on the public platform without make-up, special costume, properties or any stage accessories presents more or less realistically any piece of literature. This term includes *Personating, Impersonative Reading* and *Pure Reading.*

PERSONATING is that form of reading, here arbitrarily used to designate the art of characterization without the aid of make-up, properties, etc., but with literal action throughout, presenting more realistically than suggestively a certain form of literature which requires uninterrupted speech on the part of a single character. In this form of reading the use of properties, etc., is not only unnecessary but inconsistent and confusing to the audience.

IMPERSONATIVE READING is that form of reading in which literal action is not essential except in facial expression, and in which voluntary vocal adaptation and facial characterization are of primary importance for the presentation of eccentric or comedy characters.

This type may be regarded as the "common ground" between *personating* and *pure reading*. The use of properties in this kind of delivery would be a hindrance. Here the reader may assume *one* or *many* characters in conversation.

PURE READING is that form of reading which is purely suggestive of characterization, merely reflecting the *mood* of normal characters or describing events and situations which occur in ordinary narration and description or in lyric composition. Here the reader may assume one or several normal characters in conversation. The use of properties in pure reading is uncomplimentary to the audience.

(3.) Types of Literature Defined. THE PLAY is a dramatic composition written in *pure dialogue* form in which two or more characters are to be literally represented in appropriate make-up and costume and realistic surroundings consistent with the plot. It is intended primarily for *acting* and when so presented must involve literal action throughout with all necessary properties and with attention to the minutest detail for realistic effect. When the Play is to be presented by a reader and not by a company of actors, the form of its composition must be changed from *pure dialogue* to *descriptive dialogue* and it is then called *The Character Play* or *The Reading Play* according to essential qualifications already discussed.

THE SOLILOQUY is a composition written in the first person representing a single character in meditation, or talking to himself. No other characters are supposed to be present at any time during the speech.

(This statement may not always apply to the soliloquy *within* the Play). The Soliloquy is written for *acting* and it will be recognized as such by the apparent necessity for costume, scenery or special properties. If these accessories are obviously not essential, then the selection is intended for the reader and not the actor and it will be classed as a *Personated Soliloquy, Character Soliloquy* or *Reading Soliloquy* according to the evident purpose of its author.

THE PERSONATION is a composition in the first person written in any one of the three literary forms, *soliloquy, implied dialogue,* or *direct address.* The public platform, *not* the stage, is the place for the Personation. Here literal action is of first importance, while costumes, properties, etc., are out of place. The Personation includes four types: *The Personated Soliloquy, the Monologue, the Eccentric Address,* and *the Character Series.*

THE CHARACTER READING is composition written in first or third person and in any one of the three literary forms, *soliloquy, implied dialogue* or *descriptive dialogue.* The Character Reading requires eccentric or comedy characterization in voluntary vocal change and facial expression, but does not require literal action or prolonged attention to imaginary objects. There are four types of the Character Reading: *The Character Soliloquy, the Character Monologue, the Character Play,* and *the Character Narrative.*

THE INTERPRETATIVE READING is that class of composition written in first or third person in which the expression of *mood* and *atmosphere* is all that should

claim the reader's attention. No literal action or eccentric characterization is required. The thought and emotion of each character and the atmosphere of the narration and description must be the whole aim of the reader here. The Interpretive Reading may take the form of *soliloquy, implied dialogue, descriptive dialogue, description, pure narration, direct address,* or *lyric composition.* As sub-forms of the Interpretive Reading they are known respectively as *the Reading Soliloquy, the Reading Monologue, the Reading Play, the Descriptive Reading, the Narrative Reading, the Declamation* and *the Lyric Reading.*

UNCLASSIFIED FORMS are those selections which are purely for show or burlesque entertainment such as *Vaudeville Stunts, Character Sketches in Costume and Make-up,* and *Ventriloquial Stunts.* These forms do not come under legitimate classification as art. They require mechanical skill rather than artistic achievement.

Definition of Voice and Action.*—Since Elocution is expression of thought and emotion by means of voice and action, it will be necessary to determine exactly what is meant by these terms and how they are subdivided.

The term *Acting* must not be confused with the term Action.

ACTION refers to any bodily expression (except vocal expression) whether in repose or in motion. It includes *Pantomime* and *Bearing* and is also given

*See Figure C, in the Introduction.

a separate classification from the view-point of *literalness* and *suggestiveness.* It should be understood that all action as classified under Pantomime and Bearing may be either literal or suggestive according to the requirements of the selection to be presented.

(1.) Action Defined According to Bodily Zones. BEARING has to do with *Carriage,* or general bodily motion, and with *Poise,* or stationary position and attitude.

PANTOMIME has to do with *Facial Expression* and with *Gesture* (head, hand, arm, leg and foot).

CARRIAGE is the *Gait,* or walk, run, hop, skip, jump, lope, or stride, of an individual; the *Reciprocal Movements* (head, shoulders, arms, etc.), and *Other Bodily Movements,* such as the acts of sitting, rising, reclining, falling or kneeling.

POISE is the stationary attitude of the body whether in standing, sitting or reclining position.

FACIAL EXPRESSION has to do *first,* with manifestation of *mood* in *Subjective* facial expression, showing fear, delight, love, hate, anger, perplexity and all the various shades of thought and emotion. *Second,* it has to do with *eccentric characterization* in *Feature Movements,* such as motions of the jaw, tongue and teeth in biting and chewing or pursing the lips in kissing, etc.; in *Fixed Features* which have to do with the holding of a particular expression such as a prominent jaw, a stiff upper lip, a peculiar twist of the mouth, a closed eye or a lifted eyebrow throughout the characterization; and in *Recurring Mannerisms,* or habitual facial movements such as the twitch-

ing of the lips, the blinking of the eyes, the wrinkling of the forehead or the nose, and movements of the tongue in the cheek.

GESTURE, having to do with the movements of the head, hands and the limbs, may be classified under three divisions: *Objective Gesture,* or that which is concerned with the handling of objects, real or imaginary; *Indicative Gesture* which indicates objects at a distance or points out directions, dimensions and proportions, and *Subjective Gesture* which is inseparably associated with Subjective Facial Expression, both of which indicate condition of being, or expression of *mood,* and demand mutual coordination of all bodily agents.

(2.) Action Defined According to its Literalness and Suggestiveness. Now that Action has been defined and classified according to the different zones of expression in relation to mood and to external objects, the entire classification may be applied in either of two ways; through *literal action* or through *suggestive action.*

LITERAL ACTION refers to completed movements in Pantomime or Bearing and demands minute attention to detail. It is the kind of action required in Acting and in Personating when referring to objects real or imaginary or when expressing a mood. The key-note of literal action is *completion of movement.*

SUGGESTIVE ACTION on the other hand refers to the *initial* movement of Pantomime or Bearing sufficient to stimulate the imagination of the beholder to complete in his own mind the action thus suggested. It is the kind of action required in pure reading.

(3.) Voice Defined. VOICE, or Vocal Expression, refers to the *voluntary* and *involuntary* changes of the voice either in the mechanics of speech or in the expression of language.

INVOLUNTARY VOCAL CHANGES are those infinite shades of color in tone brought about spontaneously by the action of the mood (either mental or emotional) in the unconscious use of *Quality, Force, Pitch* and *Time.* This change of voice runs through all types of delivery for *MOOD is the basis for all true expression.*

VOLUNTARY VOCAL CHANGES are the changes consciously effected for the purpose of eccentric or comedy characterizations. These changes are brought about by a purposeful imitation of *Dialects, Local or Provincial Mannerisms* of the voice, *Defective Speech,* such as lisping, stuttering, stammering, false articulations, etc., and through conscious changes of *Quality, Force, Pitch* and *Time.*

Definition of Forms of Composition.—SOLILOQUY is that form of composition used to give utterance to the suggestion of meditative thought. In real life meditation is rarely expressed aloud, but for story and stage purposes such expression is given oral form and when rendered from the stage or platform gives the impression of "one talking to himself." It is written in the first person and in present tense situation.

IMPLIED DIALOGUE is that form of composition found in *the Monologue* which offers but one side of a supposed conversation, leaving the other side to the

imagination of the audience. It is always in first person and in present tense situation.

PURE DIALOGUE is the formal dialogue found only in *the Play*. It consists of present tense dialogue and detached parenthetical phrases indicating the action of the play together with other explanations not meant for public expression.

DESCRIPTIVE DIALOGUE consists of conversational lines in narration written in either the first or third person, and in the past tense wherever bits of description occur. These explanatory phrases are inseparably connected with the dialogue, for example, "'Bah! Humbug!' said Scrooge, and, finding nothing more expressive to say, said again, 'Humbug!'" The pure dialogue of the play is often changed by the reader to descriptive dialogue by rephrasing some of the detached stage directions which are read descriptively along with the dialogue of the play, keeping the description in the *present tense,* however, instead of in the past tense as in narration.

DIRECT ADDRESS is the form of composition directed straight at an audience, and is found only in speeches, orations, debates, didactic addresses and sermons.

NARRATION is composition which tells a story. It may contain conversation in descriptive dialogue or be pure narration without conversation. It may be written in first or third person but is always in past tense.

DESCRIPTION is composition which describes vividly a scene, an event, or a person without including the narrative feature. It is generally written in the past tense but may be written in the present.

LYRIC COMPOSITION is idealistic poetry in first or third person which expresses a universal thought or emotion in one crystallized moment of time. It is the most suggestive and imaginative type of composition and may include any of the above forms.

Definition of Mood and Atmosphere.—MOOD is the mental or emotional condition of a person.

ATMOSPHERE is the mental or emotional state of environment. It is the result of mood or a combination of moods, and may be suggested to an audience by the reader's mood independent of the moods of his characters.

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